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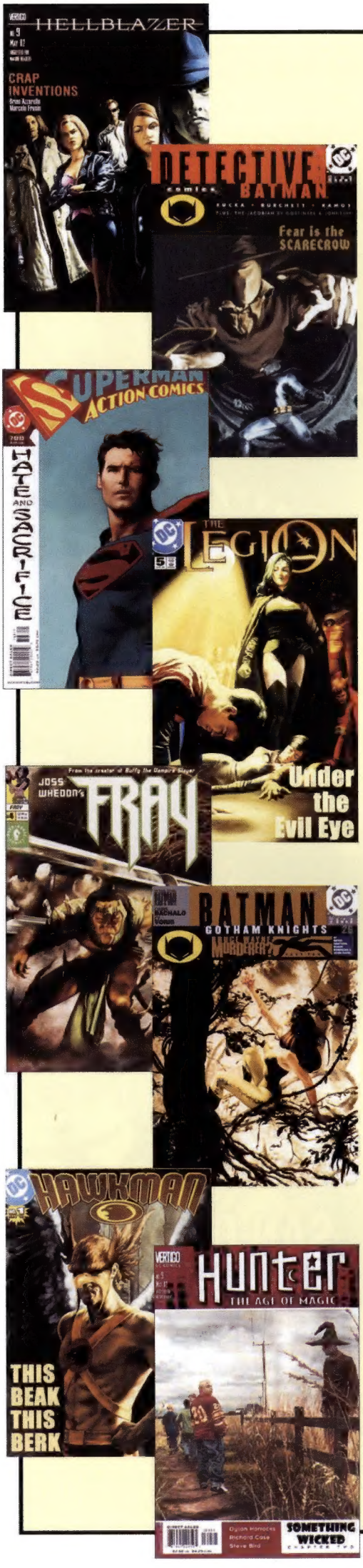

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#176 OCTOBER 2004

Inside this issue

COVER: Will it be third time lucky for Marvel's original team-up title? With fan favourites Robert Kirkman and Scot Kolins at the helm, let's hope its longevity reflects the original 150-issue series rather than the 1997 revamp which didn't even manage a dozen. For the full story on the October-launching **Marvel Team-Up**, see page 23.

News

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Sez Dez

Editorial
Dez Skinn

IT WAS something we always loved as kids, "Your two favorite heroes together in one adventure!" as they put it for 32 years in the **World's Finest** Superman and Batman lead feature. Oldsters will remember with particular affection when TV did the same, with Warner western heroes Bronco, Cheyenne and Tenderfoot often teaming up with each other and the super smooth private eyes from *77 Sunset Strip* and *Hawaiian Eye* getting together in the same show.

It's a popular gimmick with a zillion examples all the way up to the *Absolutely Fabulous* viragoes appearing in *Roseanne* and the *Bad Girls/Footballers Wives* crossover. But it only works because it's an exceptional episode in a continuing series. Most fiction exists in its own pocket world, so if our hero doesn't save the day, there aren't usually countless other detectives, cowboys, pirates or superheroes to step in. Neil Simon spoofs excluded, if Charlie Chan is stumped, you can't expect Hercule Poirot to jump in.

So it is with comics. Excluding the bone fide supergroups, team-ups used to be few and far between, but they proved irresistible to readers. Both DC's **Showcase** and **Brave and the Bold** bowed to sales pressure and totally dropped their more innovative pilot premise once team-ups were tried out.

However, despite these titles and the ever-growing ranks of the Justice League, you could still find anachronistic exceptions. It constantly perplexed me how would-be world conquerors cover-cackled boldy, "Now that I've defeated The Atom, *nobody* can stop me!" Yeah? How's that then? What about Superman or Green Lantern? Ah, but it's in an *issue* of **The Atom**. Guess it would sound pretty limp if the villain spouted something like, "Now that I've defeated The Atom, I'm ready to take on do-gooders taller than six inches!"

As soon as it had its own farrago of super spandex, Marvel followed suit with monthly team-up titles for Spider-Man and the Thing. Before long, it became commonplace. Team-ups and crossovers became the rule, across time, space and even publishers.

Things have died down now, with DC and Marvel refusing to play in the same sandbox and most everybody else out of the picture or their tales marginalised.

Enter Marvel's hottest new exclusive writer Robert Kirkman who has made an interesting promise for his revived monthly melange in the new **Marvel Team-Up**. "I'll be using damn near everybody in the Marvel U by the end of #25," he boldly announced at the recent San Diego ComiCon.

If nothing else, such a comment would guarantee reader retention for the book, with ideas aplenty from the bizarre to the daft to fill many an issue's letters column.

...If they still had such.

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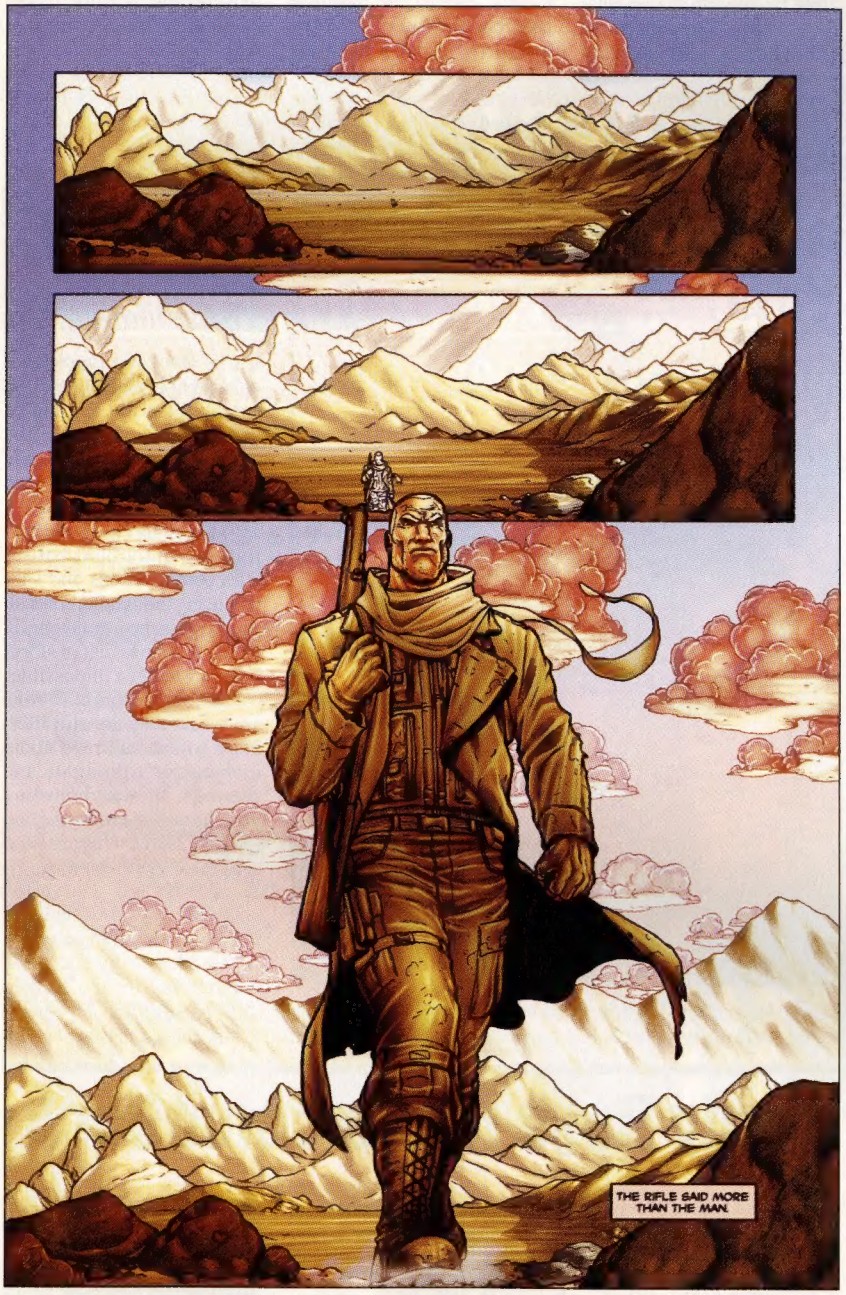
Fears for world inspire fresh look at war in Avatar mini



Garth Ennis's fascination with history of modern human conflict leads him to consider long term effect on soldiers

A WRITER well known for his dark sense of humour and a penchant for over-the-top violence is to take a look at the effects of war in an Avatar Press six-parter.

"**303** tells of a Russian Special Forces Colonel, who – after a particularly brutal bit of black ops nastiness in Afghanistan – decides to walk to America to take out a highly important target," explained the writer, **Preacher** co-creator Garth Ennis.

303, quite simply

"The title refers to the rifle he's going to use for the job, an antique British army Lee Enfield, three-oh-three calibre. This was the weapon that took the British army through two world wars and survived in its service until long after the second," added Ennis, who currently writes **The Punisher** for Marvel. "It still shows up today from time to time, carried by tribesmen and guerrilla fighters in some of the world's most brutal conflicts. The Lee Enfield is one of the great success stories of killing technology; it's simple to use, what flaws it possesses are few and far between and it'll withstand a good deal of very rough treatment indeed before it stops doing what it says on the tin."

Getting down to specifics, Ennis, who has written a number of more traditional war comics *[see below]*, continued, "This particular Lee Enfield, however, is not just some artifact long overdue for retirement. High in the war-ravaged mountains of Afghanistan, the rifle falls into the hands of a man who plans to do the unthinkable: who sets out on a journey across whole continents, who fights his way through killing grounds both terrible and unexpected, all so he can fire a single bullet at the most important target in the world."

Worn-out hero

"**303** begins as a war story, but changes halfway through into something I'm still not certain of myself," the writer added. "This is odd territory we're traversing, where the past pushes its warriors into the present with murderous intent, aiding and abetting destiny by means of numerous unwitting agents. It's the tale of a soldier who's been fighting for nothing all his life but now believes he's found his purpose and it's about the one man who can stop him, a worn-out hero filled with fatal sadness."

"If I had to sum it up in one line, I'd say **303** was inspired by my fears for the world," concluded Ennis, who is joined on the mini by **Alan Moore's The Courtyard** artist Jacen Burrows *[see art left]*.

***303** #1, priced $3.99, ships in October.*

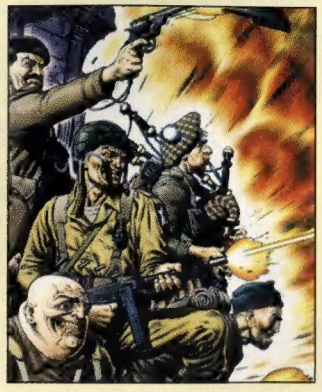
Preacher co-creator's battlefield stories

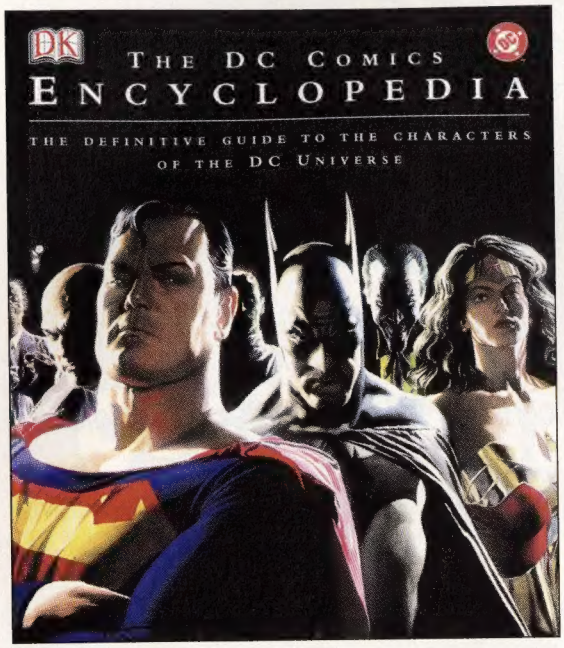
ALTHOUGH he garners plaudits for his work on **Preacher**, **Hellblazer**, **The Punisher**, **Hitman** and his various other iconoclastic tales of mayhem and violence, Garth Ennis has a fondness for the Second World War as evidenced by some of the other titles he has written.

In 1997, he dissected DC's WWII secret operative, the Unknown Soldier, in a four-parter before going on to contribute to **Weird War Tales**, Vertigo's 2000 one-shot. The following year he introduced DC's German fighter pilot from the First World War into the 1939-45 conflict in the two-issue **Enemy Ace: War in Heaven**.

At about the same time he teamed up with artist Carlos Ezquerra, a frequent collaborator, for two tongue-in-cheek three-parters – **Adventures in the Rifle Brigade** [2000] *[see extract from Brian Bolland's first issue cover art, right]* and its 2001 sequel **Operation Bollock** – before taking a more serious and realistic look at war in a series of 64-page **War Story** one-shots for Vertigo.

With each drawn by a different artist, 2001's **D-Day Dodgers** (illustrated by John Higgins) and **Johann's Tiger** (Chris Weston) were followed in 2002 by **Screaming Eagles** (Dave Gibbons) and **Nightingale** (David Lloyd). A further four were released in 2003: **Archangel**, **Condors**, **J for Jenny** and **The Reivers**, drawn by Gary Erskine, Ezquerra, Lloyd and Cam Kennedy respectively.





DORLING Kindersley is to complement its line of ***Ultimate Guides*** *titles – dedicated to specific DC superheroes – with a 352-page hardback that spotlights more than 1,000 heroes, villains and other inhabitants of the DC Universe. Published on October 28 and priced £21/$40, the heavily-illustrated* ***DC Comics Encyclopedia*** [cover art above by Alex Ross] *has been compiled by* ***Batgirl: Year One****'s Scott Beatty, DC continuity guru Bob Greenberger, Phil (****Wonder Woman****) Jimenez and Daniel Wallace, the author of such* ***Star Wars*** *books as* ***The Essential Guide to Planets and Moons****.*

What If...? returns

MARVEL is to revive its imaginary stories title after a six-year absence, but as a series of seven one-shots, all shipping in December.

Covers to ***What If...?*** *#1 from 1977* [above] *and 1989* [below].

"I think the most important thing that I want to make clear is that we are going back to the original concept of **What If...?**," stated editor C B Cebulski. "We are not making things up whole cloth or doing *Elseworlds* type stories.

"We are going back to basics," he stressed. "These stories are based on classic Marvel tales we have already told but they are about a divergence from those past stories. We are going to zig where the others zagged. I think that was where the second **What If...?** series failed; when it started making up scenarios we had never seen before.

"**What If...?** will be a playground for both established creators as well as emerging talent, with the odds in favour of the former," continued Cebulski. "As for the stories, Marvel has a clear idea of what it is looking for from this series.

"**What If...?** comics will all be story-driven, based on popular Marvel stories that we are twisting," stated the editor, who considers DC's similarly-themed *Elseworlds* titles to be character driven – changing the hero's origin or his regular setting – and thus entirely divorced from DC continuity.

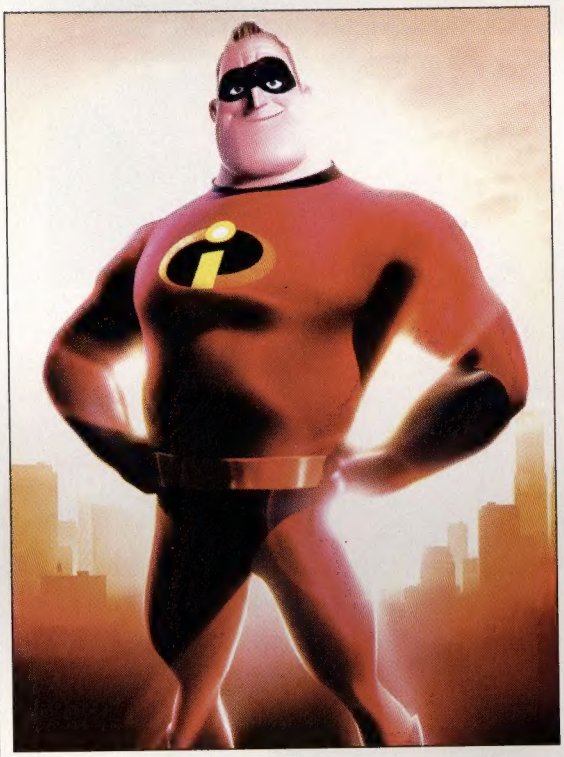
Dark Horse adapts Pixar's superhero pic

ALTHOUGH *Shrek 2* has not inspired Dark Horse to follow up its three-issue 2001 tie-in with the original film, the Oregon-based publisher is still actively pursuing the comics licences to animated features.

Its latest acquisition is *The Incredibles*. Created by Pixar, the animation studio responsible for such features as *Finding Nemo*, *Monsters Inc* and *Toy Story*, it is being adapted from director/writer Brad Bird's script by Ricardo Curtis, one of the movie's storyboard team.

Curtis told **CI** the film focuses on a family of superheroes who are no longer allowed to use their powers. "They need to learn how to fit into the normal world while there are forces pushing them to continue with their hero work."

A Dark Horse four-parter, **The Incredibles** is Curtis's first comicbook work. Asked how storyboarding compared with drawing comics, the artist, who is joined on the project by RPG illustrator turned inker Ramon Perez, responded, "The sequential nature of both is the obvious similarity but the dynamics of trying to get the most impact out of every panel also rings true for both."



Above: Mr Incredible, the star of The Incredibles, *features on promo art for the Pixar movie, which premieres in the US on November 5.*

Visual literature

Curtis also said there were also a number of differences, among them the amount of information that can be conveyed in every comic panel being far greater than in any storyboard panel. "An artist can have 10 heroes fighting individual battles with conversations and subtext using thought bubbles all in the same comicbook panel. A similar feat in storyboards would be impossible.

"Though comic books are visual they are still literature so one can read about a character's thoughts and feelings. In storyboarding you have to show everything," stated Curtis, who said the biggest challenge he faced with the adaptation was finding a good balance between staying true to the film and making the book entertaining for the reader.

The Incredibles *#1, priced $2.99, ships on November 24.*

Hardy Boys make comeback

A COMPANY best-known for its sophisticated graphic novels is to launch a line of periodicals aimed at 8 to 14-year olds.

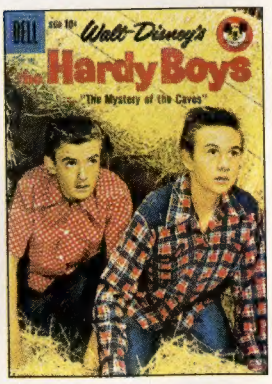
For its new Papercutz imprint, NBM – which has been repackaging European albums for the US market since 1976 – is to revive characters whose place in American pop culture is similar to that occupied by Enid Blyton's Famous Five or Richmal Crompton's Just William in Britain.

While it has not given any details of its **Nancy Drew** comic, NBM is to inaugurate its new imprint with a monthly title starring the two still in high school detectives who have been in print since 1927 when Leslie McFarlane – writing as Franklin W Dixon – introduced them in **The Tower Treasure**.

The Hardy Boys, written by Scott (**X-Men**) Lobdell and drawn by Lea (**Rumble Girls**) Hernandez, is to feature the two brothers in a modern setting, investigating present day crimes.

● Stars of a long-running series of novels, Frank and Joe Hardy also had their own live action TV shows in the 1950s, '60s and '90s as well as a Filmation cartoon series in the 1970s.

The Hardy Boys *#1, priced $2.95, ships in November.*



Above: The cover to ***Four Color*** *#964 [1959], the last of the four annual issues of the Dell title to tie-in with* The Hardy Boys *serial shown on ABC TV's* Mickey Mouse Club.

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WildStorm offers different takes on

*Former **Batman** writer relaunches **The Authority** into **Revolution** while Three Kings scripter's graphic novel looks at what makes members tick*

*Above and below: Interior pages from **The Authority: Human on the Inside** graphic novel; art by Ben Oliver, the English artist probably best known for illustrating **Puncture** for London's com.x.*

WHILE WildStorm appears to have quietly axed its Robbie Morrison-written **Authority** ongoing series, it continues to show faith in the controversial superteam created by Warren Ellis and Bryan Hitch.

The San Diego-based DC imprint is to feature Apollo, Midnighter and the other members of the group in two high profile projects – a 96-page hardcover graphic novel and a 12-parter that explores the WildStorm Universe in the aftermath of the recent *Coup d'Etat* crossover.

Three Kings

First up on September 15 is **Human on the Inside**, a $24.95 graphic novel by screenwriter John Ridley and **Puncture** artist Ben Oliver.

Speaking about the project, Ridley – whose credits include *Three Kings* and *U Turn* – told **CI**, "I wanted to reset The Authority a little bit, bring it back a little closer to its StormWatch roots; to really look at the characters as characters and not as just as guys with superpowers who take on alien invasions and those kind of things and to dissect and excavate what the characters are about.

"It's tough," the writer continued. "When you're writing a comicbook with beings with superpowers, elements of it have to be really big. They have to take on worthy opponents. But I wanted to find what was, in a sense, the smallest story I could tell with superheroes and still make it a big enough story that people would want to read it."

Behind the facade

Human on the Inside is Ridley's first comicbook work. A standalone story, it does, as he explained, bring in some elements from the past as a reward to loyal fans. "Everything you do has a consequence and sometimes The Authority – much like a lot of supergroups – seems above repercussions. I wanted part of the story to deal with the results of their actions."

Seeking to summarise the concept, Ridley said, "My high concept pitch would be along the lines of *Spider-Man 2* or *Superman* and *Superman II* – let's look at these superheroes as real human beings. Their powers let them do all these things but what happens when these people with magnificent abilities prove to be human. And, as the title implies, they are human on the inside – it's about examining the infrastructure of these characters as much as the facade."

*Above: Ben Oliver's cover art for **The Authority: Human on the Inside**, WildStorm's 96-page hardcover graphic novel.*

Second revolution

Shipping seven weeks after **Human on the Inside** is the first of the 12 $2.95 issues of **Revolution**.

Written by **Gotham Central**'s Ed Brubaker and drawn by **Wildcats Version 3.0** artists Dustin Nguyen and Richard Friend, the high-profile series premieres on October 27. It opens with the team governing the USA while ordinary citizens, unhappy at the loss of their inalienable rights, begin planning a second American Revolution.

An ex-**Batman** writer, Brubaker described the group to **CI** as the superteam that makes other superteams look like pussies. "They are the team that redefined what modern 21st century superheroing is about. And they take no prisoners."

Asked about the story, he responded, "I'm keeping my plotline very close to my chest, but I can tell you why I wanted to work on this book. I wanted to have some straight-up fun with a superhero comic for a change, instead of going for the world-weary gritty stuff every time. I wanted something big and over the top that would let me do a huge superteam and make somewhat subtle comments on the nature of mainstream comics at the same time and that's what the Authority is at its best – a great example of the superhero genre as well as a poke in its eye when it's not looking. And I wanted to do something that would make me and at least a few other people laugh... hopefully."

Rotating artists

Revolution is the third time **The Authority** has been relaunched by WildStorm since its inception in 1999. Responding to the suggestion that many consider the concept past its sell-by date or, at least, drained of any originality by the various attempts to reinvent the team, the writer responded, "I don't know that I'd say there's been any attempt to really reinvent the team, per se. Certainly, they gave it a new number one when they launched the Mature Readers monthly but everything followed the previous continuity, as does my run.

"I think a lot of people were just turned-off by all

controversial team

the editorial changes that were unfortunately made public and by the rotating artists on Mark Millar's run, that's all," Brubaker added.

"As for the concept being stale," he continued, "how can it be any staler than the JLA or the X-Men or the Avengers or the Ultimates? They're all superhero teams. I think the main difference is that the Authority under Warren was really pushing the envelope and now many other books were influenced by that and so the Authority doesn't stand out so much as it used to."

Above: An interior page from the first issue of ***The Authority: Revolution*** *12-parter; Dustin Nguyen and Richard Friend art.*

Shit comics

"Maybe I'm just in a grumpy mood right now but if over 100,000 people could continue buying the X-Men through the last 25 years of mostly shit comics – until Grant Morrison and now Joss Whedon arrived – then I don't see what **Authority** fans have to complain about," the writer replied when asked what he would say to fans disenchanted by the constants reboots and make-overs to encourage them to take a look at his version. "So the book got jerked around a little and lost a great artist to Marvel because he got offered a lot more money. This is still the same team that Mark and Warren wrote, the same costumes, same attitudes and the same wide-open potential to push the boundaries and blow people away.

"If you're a true fan of **The Authority**, then how could you not want to give it another chance to be great again? It's not like it's been letting you down over and over again, really. And the work in those **Absolute** editions has certainly shown they deserve at least one more chance, I think," he ended.

Above: Dustin Nguyen and Richard Friend's cover art for ***The Authority: Revolution*** *#1 (of 12).*

DC imprint whets its Razor's Edge

JOHN Ridley is to make his comicbook debut on September 15 with **The Authority: Human on the Inside** graphic novel *[see main story]* but the *Three Kings* screenwriter has his second project following closely behind.

Premiering on October 27 is **The Razor's Edge**. A $2.95 showcase title in the **Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight** or **Spider-Man: Tangled Web** mold, it is to spotlight different characters in serials by an ever-changing roster of writers and artists.

The $2.95 WildStorm monthly kicks off with **Warblade**, a five-parter which reintroduces the Wolverine-like Reno Bryce, one of the original members of WildC.A.T.S.

This inaugural serial is written by Ridley, who is teamed with up with **Lobo** artist Simon Bisley *[see first issue cover art, above]*.

Vicious killer

Ridley, who admitted he had never heard of Warblade before WildStorm approached him with the assignment, told **CI**, "It was almost like a blank cheque – people knew him but he hadn't been seen in years. I really liked the idea of dealing with this guy, who was just a violent, vicious killer of a hero, who'd just gone through a traumatic episode with his girlfriend being killed in front of his eyes and then going off to get revenge before disappearing."

Continuity slave

"I felt it was an opportunity to write a really deep story about what happens after you get the revenge you seek," Ridley added. "Do you get any peace in your life? Do you get closure? Where do you go and what happens? What happens when you have the capacity to be a hero but you're not one?

"For me, that was the exciting thing about it," the writer continued. "With **The Authority** you're beholden. You have to accept everything that's gone before. With **Warblade** I didn't feel that need to be a slave to continuity. Certainly I wanted to admit his history but I felt a lot freer in what I was doing."

- Introduced in **Wild C.A.T.S: Covert Action Teams** #1 [Image, 1992], Warblade also appeared in his own four-issue 1995 miniseries – **Warblade: Endangered Species**.

An alien who forms blades out of his fingers but can also create hammers, shields and other weapons out of his body, his most recent appearance was in 2001's **WildCats** v2 #7.

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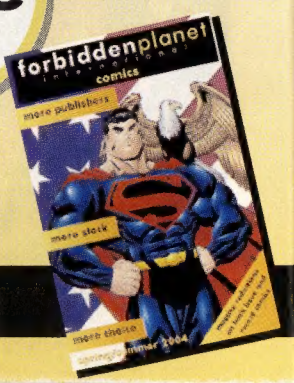

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Dominator vs F.A.K.K.2

CREATED in 1988 as a one-off strip for the UK's **Metal Hammer** magazine, Tony Luke's Dominator has now come home to the West after becoming a success in the East.

When asked in 1993 by top Japanese comics publisher Kodansha to create a new full colour strip for one of their million-selling monthly titles, along with writer Alan (**Lobo**) Grant, he revived Dominator.

Fast forward to 1999 the year of the crash in the price of computer software. Ex-University of Manchester student Luke, with his degree in animation suddenly discovered his long-term dream of making an animated movie could be realised.

The end product, produced in Luke's double screen Apple Mac home studio "on software that used to cost about £100,000 but I could buy for about two grand" was a £25,000 Dominator movie made for the Sci-Fi Channel. For this undertaking, Luke and Grant brought in the talents of Doug Bradley (Pinhead in the **Hellraiser** movies) plus local Brighton entrepreneur Jim Brathwaite and voice actors including TV's Liza Goddard, director/critic Alex *(Repo Man)* Cox, Dani Filth (lead singer of Cradle of Filth) and Radio 1 DJs Mark and Lard.

The 80-minute end product was screened at Cannes last year and finally came to the attention of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles co-creator Kevin Eastman. He was so impressed with the giant guitar-wielding demon who rules the sonic region of Hell that he suggested a crossover with his and Julie Strain's own *F.A.K.K.2*.

Above: Tony Luke, artist/animator and driving force behind the Brighton-based Renga Media. Below: Dominator, Lady Violator and friends.

For this Grant-scripted movie, Luke is reunited with his design partner, the top Japanese character and monster designer Yashushi Nirasawa, who had worked with him on the original Sci-Fi Channel short, *Archangel Thunderbird*, the 30-minute surprise hit which, "made for the price of a fridge" as Luke sums it up, led to the commissioning of the full length *Dominator* movie.

With this original movie now available on DVD, Renga has created a free downloadable short, *A Brief History of Hell*, previewing the feature along with guest art by Glenn Fabry, Steve Pugh and Liam Sharp at www.rengamedia.com.

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ROBERT Rodi and Jamie Tolagson are risking the wrath of older Marvel Comics fans by reviving a highly regarded 1970s series, which many view as Marv Wolfman and Gene Colan's masterwork. Aided by **Incredible Hulk**'s Bruce Jones, the **Identity Disc** writer and the **Superman: The Kansas Sighting** artist are relaunching **Tomb of Dracula** as a six-parter in which Blade and other leading vampire slayers have four days to kill the Transylvanian Count while he is in his most vulnerable state. But the vampire lord is well protected by a host of powerful guardians. Shown above is Bill Sienkiewicz's cover art for the first $2.99 issue, which ships on October 6.

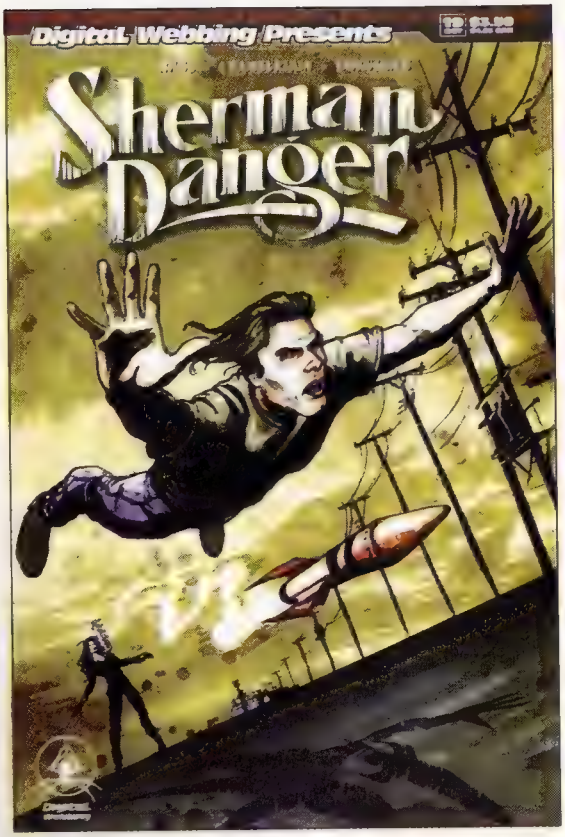
Move over, Sam Slade

THE unceasingly prolific Steve Niles is taking a break from putting his increasingly popular 21st century spins on classic horror themes to introduce an SF champion.

Premiering in October in the $3.50 **Digital Webbing Presents** #19 is Sherman Danger: Robot Hunter, a hero in the mould of Magnus, Robot Fighter and **2000 AD**'s Sam Slade, Robo Hunter.

"*Sherman Danger* is about an out-of-work robot hunter who's finally settled down and started a family. The robot problem that's plagued man is finally under control, until things heat up very quickly and Sherman gets pulled into action again," explained newcomer Kody Chamberlain, who is drawing the strip as well as *Dead Billy Dead*, Niles' contribution to **30 Days of Night: Bloodsucker Tales**, the IDW anthology spinning off from the writer's first hit series.

The first colour issue of an indie anthology launched in 2000, **Digital Webbing Presents** #19 includes a story by IDW's **Underworld** artist Nick Postic among its other strips.



Above: The cover to **Digital Webbing Presents** #19, the first colour issue of the monthly indie anthology; art by Kody Chamberlain.

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Brits' Wonderland realised at Image

ONE OF Image's latest projects is a 64-page oneshot that developed after a British artist approached a writer with whom he wanted to work.

"I wanted to do a comic set in a post-apocalyptic world that centred around the lives of three teenagers and a robot," former AP Comics **Monster Club** artist Kit Wallis told **CI** when discussing **Wonderland** *[see art above]*. "I took this idea to Derek [Watson] and he developed it into what it now is. I also wanted to experiment with colouring techniques: in this case I coloured the pages with watercolour, scanned the images into the computer and manipulated them in Photoshop."

World without adults

Watson, owner of St Albans' Chaos City which he used to run with AP's Richard Emms, added, "With this story I wanted to examine how a group of teenagers would deal with extreme situations with no guidance and/or involvement from adults. We already live in a world where children grow up more quickly than we'd like them to; I just wanted to take that observation one step further.

"As the story progresses," he continued, "it becomes clear that the children have been brought up to rely only on their own wits and skills. Because the world outside has been contaminated by chemical and biological warfare they have created their own ecosystem: they grow their own food and purify their water – we find out during the course of the story that this is what has saved them from the diseases that humans who live off the land have contracted."

London in ruins

"They have intentionally isolated themselves from the world outside in order to survive and, even though they know that they are in the minority, they still believe that things will get better," Watson added.

Wonderland is set in a post-apocalyptic London and Wallis said his greatest challenge while working on the comic was "probably trying to create a realistic 'future' London, and make it look like a London in ruins".

***Wonderland**, priced $6.95, ships on October 20.*

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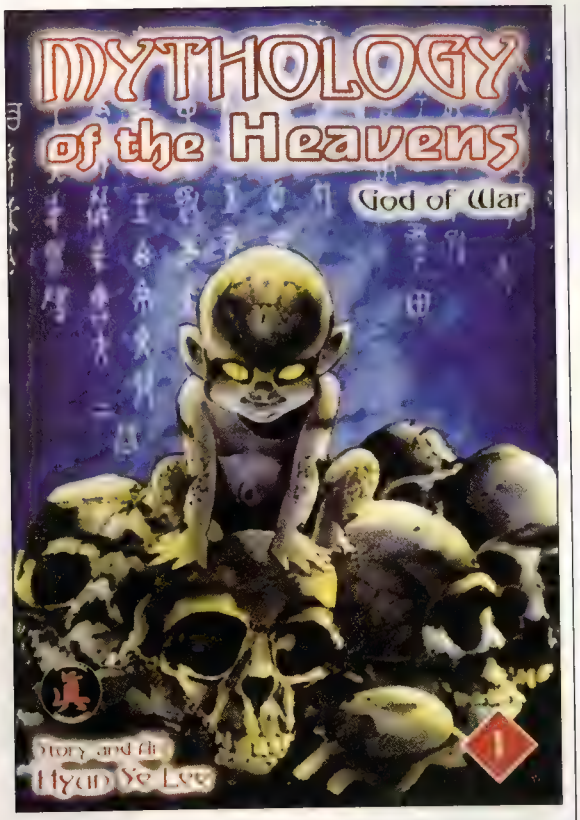

AIMED at 16 year olds and up, Central Park Media's latest manwha [Korean comic] is the story of a father who slaughters all his children after a goddess tells him he will die at the hands of one of his sons. But one of his offspring survives to be raised by a human/wolf hybrid, who has plans of his own for the child. Set in ancient Korea, Hyun Se Lee's black and white ***Mythology of the Heavens*** *premieres on November 10 in the now-standard 5x7" manga/digest format.* ***God of War****, the 328-page first volume is priced $9.99.*

DC/Powerade promo runs to three million

MARVEL'S **NFL SuperPro** series may have died a quick death in 1992 but sports-themed comics are nothing new with the likes of Babe Ruth and Mickey Mantle lending their names to titles during the 1940s and '50s.

Even the former Cassius Clay got in on the act in 1978 with DC's **Superman vs Muhammed Ali**. Now a young hotshot basketball star is getting his own comic but only to market a sports drink he has created.

LeBron James' Powerade Flava23 is being promoted with three million copies of **King James**, which is written by crime novelist Gary Phillips and drawn by **Batgirl**'s Damion Scott and Sandra (**Crimson**) Hope. Produced by DC, it focuses on the 19-year old as he competes in a mysterious secret organisation's underground tournament.

Copies of the one-shot are free with coupons from Powerade bottles. Although the comic is available in 10 different cover editions most of these can only be acquired in specific outlets.

Above: Three of the 10 alternate covers to DC/Powerade's ***King James*** *one-shot; art (left to right) by Ariel Olivetti, Damion Scott and Jock. With some artists providing art for more than one cover, James Jean, John van Fleet and UDON Studios are the others contributing to the Flava23 promotion.*

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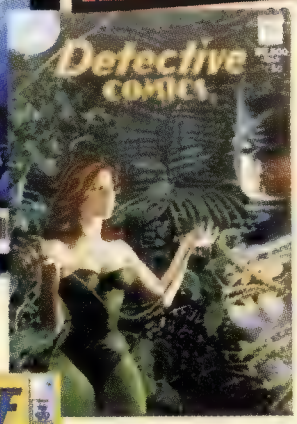

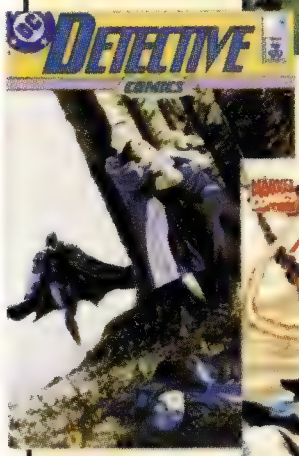

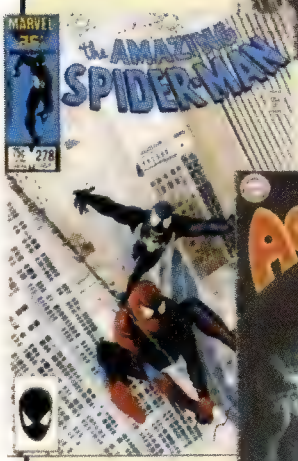

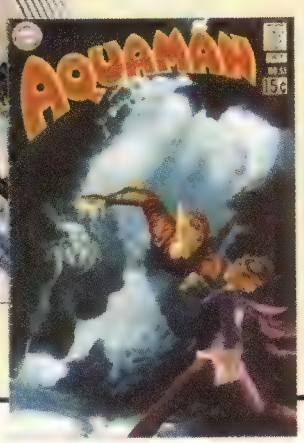

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Publishers continue their dependence

San Diego convention announcements reveal little by way of experimentation or innovation

IN JULY over 87,000 people attended the 35th Comic-Con International in San Diego but even that huge crowd could not disguise the fact that the major annual event on the comics industry's calendar is becoming less about comics and more of a media circus.

There are many, in fact, who put the record-breaking numbers down to the public's desire to see the host of movie and TV personalities who now attend the convention every year. But, even as comics become sidelined by films, video games, toys and other merchandise, many publishers still view the San Diego con as being the best platform from which to announce major projects.

Bill Jemas era

Unlike in recent years when Marvel was content to let DC, its major competitor, steal the San Diego spotlight – saving news of its own big plans for release at **Wizard**'s Chicago convention instead – the self-styled House of Ideas was ready to announce a number of projects. Undermining its sobriquet somewhat, these were mainly rehashes of existing concepts suggesting the Bill Jemas-driven era of innovation and experimentation is well and truly over as Marvel refocuses on what it does best... superhero comics.

Young Avengers

In the wake of *Avengers Disassembled*, **Daredevil** writer Brian Michael Bendis and artist David Finch, who worked together on the final issues of **Avengers**, are to reform the team. The new line-up of Captain America, Iron Man, Spider-Man and Wolverine is to debut in the first issue of the blandly titled **New Avengers** this November.

More interesting are plans for **Young Avengers**, which is described as being inspired by DC's **Teen Titans**. An ongoing series, it is written by Allan Heinberg – a writer on TV's *The OC* making his comics debut – and drawn by Jimmy Cheung. The former CrossGen artist is now exclusive to Marvel.

Another **Avengers** spin-off is a biweekly eight-parter, which, says writer Joe Casey, re-examines the early days of the team, from the initial meeting to their first line-up change. "It's a bit of a *Behind the Music* version of the classic first 16 issues, viewed from the perspective of time. A lot of untold secrets will be revealed and we delve deeper into the relationships of the original members than I think has ever been seen before."

Team-Up revival

Set to join Casey – who wrote WildStorm's just-cancelled **Wildcats Version 3.0** – on **Avengers: Earth's Mightiest Heroes** is Scott Kolins.

The former **Flash** artist is also attached to the forthcoming revival of **Marvel Team-Up** . The resurrection of the 1970s title is written by Robert Kirkman. *[See page 23 for further details.]*

Another Marvel title to be relaunched is **Captain America**, which gets a new first issue and a new creative team in November. Joining **Gotham Central** writer Ed Brubaker on the series is another CrossGen refugee, **El Cazador**'s Steve Epting, who is also one of the guest artists on **Avengers Finale**.

A 48-page one-shot, it is written by Bendis and wraps up his *Avengers Disassembled* storyline. Drawn by Finch, it also features contributions by George Pérez, Cheung, Darick Robertson Michael Avon Oeming and Eric Powell among others.

Marvel is also reviving **Thunderbolts** as a monthly title to be co-written by Kurt Busiek and Fabian Nicieza, who replaced Busiek on the original series. The relaunch is being pencilled by Tom Grummet, who worked with both writers on the recent **Avengers/Thunderbolts** five-parter.

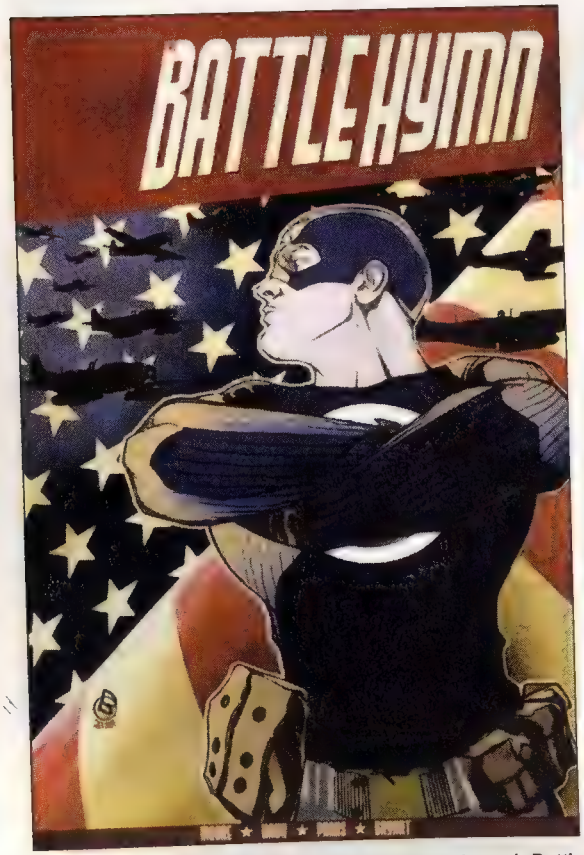
Cap mystery story

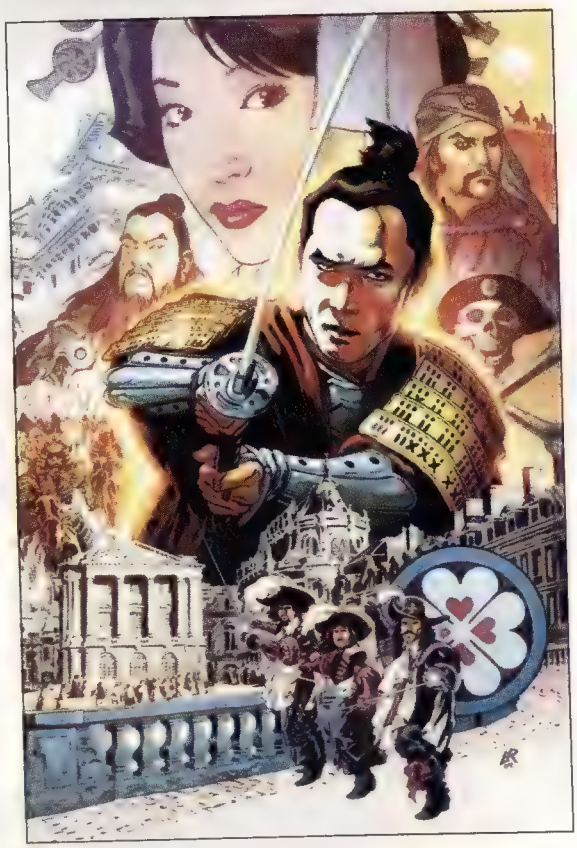
As for Brubaker's take on the Sentinel of Liberty, he said, "I came up with a mystery angle for my doorway into the character.

"Something awful and unexpected happens and Cap gets involved with a sort of espionage mystery," the one-time **Batman** writer continued. "Not like **Secret War** where he's going on black-ops missions, it's a very Captain America-centric story but one that makes him look for a lot of buried secrets. But still with the requisite amount of shield tossing, amazing feats, fights with HYDRA and A.I.M., yet at the same time the first arc is really a mystery-driven character piece."

Morrison's JLA

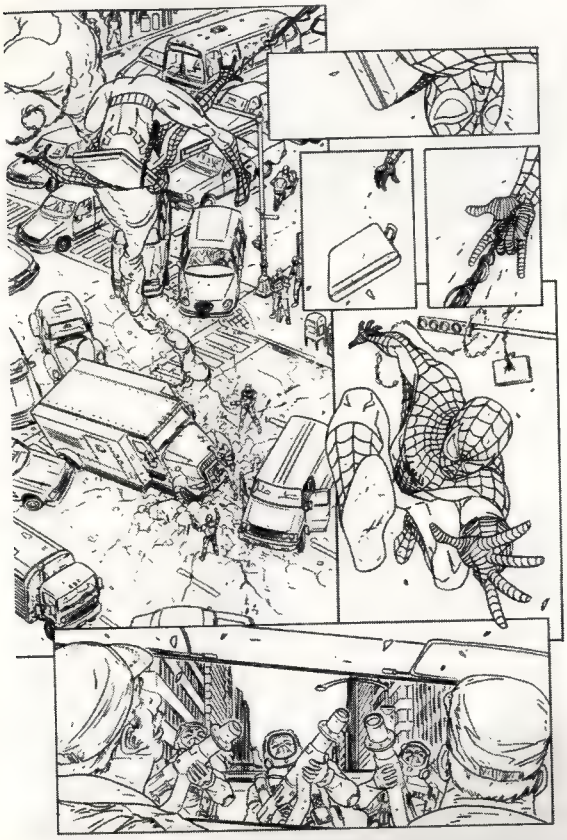
Despite being responsible for far more adventurous comics than Marvel ever





Pictured: Jeremy Haun and Brian Frey art promoting Image's ***Battle Hymn*** *five-parter [above]; Jim Lee and Sandra Hope's promo art for WildStorm's* ***The Intimates*** *[top] and Luke Ross's promo art for Dark Horse's five-issue* ***Samurai: Heaven and Earth*** *[right].*

on superhero comics



*Above: A Scott Kolins-pencilled interior page from the first issue of the relaunched **Marvel Team-Up** [see page 23 for full story].*

was, DC also failed to ignite the interest of fandom, exhibiting a continuing reliance on superheroes and spin-offs of its own.

Once more risking a dilution of the **Justice League** franchise as took place in the mid-1990s, DC has another **JLA** spin-off in the pipeline.

Lined up to follow the recently launched **Justice League Elite** is **JLA Classified**. Similar to **Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight**, this ongoing series is a platform for various writers and artists to tell stories from any era in the League's history.

The first story arc is illustrated by **Superman/Batman**'s Ed McGuinness. Ironically, it is written by Grant Morrison, who rescued the over-exposed property, relaunching the core series as **JLA** in 1997.

Marvel editor

A former Marvel editor-in-chief is introducing a new superhero into the DC Universe in January.

Breach is written by Written by **Avengers**' Bob Harras, who said, "It is the story of what happens after an American military research operation, Project Otherside, pierces the membrane between our dimension and the next. It is the story of the lives that are severely impacted by that breach and the threat it unleashes upon the world.

"The series focuses on one man, Major Tim Porter, who finds his entire world, his very humanity, turned upside down by the events at Otherside. To his shock , he discovers he may be the world's only hope against this new threat – or he may turn out to be the herald of our destruction," added the writer, who is joined on the series by the **Batgirl: Year One** art team of Marcos Martín and Alvaro Lopez.

Niles on Batman

One intriguing project DC announced was **Batman: Gotham County Line**.

A prestige format three-parter it brings current horrormeister Steve Niles into superhero territory for the first time. The story, which pits the Dark Knight against a rash of home-invasion murderers, is illustrated by **Black Widow**'s Scott Hampton.

"I don't want to give away too much but I'm trying some new things in this book," said the writer whose credits include **30 Days of Night** and **Wake the Dead**. "I've taken Batman out of his element and he's in the suburbs now. The whole thing is sort of about Batman's belief system, or lack there of, and puts him on his heels. Placing him in the suburbs is really keeping him out of his element."

*PICTURED are pencilled interior pages from **Infantry** [above, art by Clement Sauve] and **The Blade of Kumori** [below, art by Grafiksismik], two of the four titles that make up the initial launch of Aftermath, the superhero line from Devil's Due.*

Also working on a Bat-project is Matt Wagner. The **Grendel** creator's 12-issue **Batman: Dark Moon Rising** is set a year after the Dark Knight first appeared, as he is becoming over-confident in his ability to scare criminals. As Wagner put it, "What happens when you jump out and say 'Boo!' and they say 'Rrarrrr!' by way of response?"

Kamandi Archives

Ever looking for ways to best utilise its extensive Batman archives, DC is planning a trade paperback series that will reprint every Batman tale in chronological order.

Scheduled for a 2005 launch, **Batman Chronicles** starts from **Detective Comics** #27. It is to include the stories from that series as well as from **Batman**, **World's Finest Comics** and any other title in which the Dark Knight starred in his own adventures.

Staying with reprints, the next addition to DC's hardcover **Archives** line is to feature the Last Boy on Earth – Jack Kirby's 1972 creation **Kamandi**.

But, for something a little off the wall, Joe Kelly and **The Last Avengers Story** artist Ariel Olivetti are combining their talents to reveal the origin of a Hanna Barbera cartoon hero developed by influential comics artist Alex Toth in 1966.

Grim ghost?

"I thought that Space Ghost could carry a sort of Lone Ranger-type origin to darken him up," explained **Justice League Elite** scripter Kelly on the six-issue **Space Ghost** series.

"I thought that before he teamed up with the kids he would have been a dark kind of character. He wears a black hood which is scary in and of itself. I never understood the fact that he was part of an intergalactic police force but he was the only member. They never showed anyone else, so I started to build an origin out of that."

Bizarro World

Another unusual project announced at San Diego was **Bizarro World**.

A follow up to the 2001 released **Bizarro Comics**, the anthology features a host of indie creators putting their spin on DC's heroes. Among those contributing are Harvey Pekar, Peter Bagge, Evan Dorkin, Craig Thompson, Gilbert Hernandez and Andi Watson.

Getting back to more mainstream superheroics was a promise Erik Larsen made when he replaced Jim Valentino as Image publisher

continued overleaf

San Diego shorts

SCOTT McCloud has signed with HarperCollins for a follow up to **Understanding Comics** and **Reinventing Comics**. Tentatively titled **Making Comics**, it will take an in-depth look at storytelling.

JLA/Avengers writer Kurt Busiek and Ron (**Captain America**) Garney are to be the **JLA**'s regular creative team.

AMAZING Spider-Man artist John Romita Jr is to join **The Ultimates** writer Mark Millar for a 12-issue run on **Wolverine**.

The pair take over the Marvel title with #20, which ships in October.

WRITERS Joe Kelly, Joe Casey, Steve Seagle and artist Duncan Rouleau – who operate collectively as *The Man of Action* studio – are each creating a graphic novel for Richard Starkings' Active Images.

First up is Rouleau's black and white **Nightmarist**, a 96-page hardcover shipping in January. "It's about a guy who goes into the universal subconscious through somebody else's brain and has to find a way back to his own mind," explained the artist.

BEGINNING in November with #634, DC is putting a what it hopes to be a permanent creative team on **Batman** with former **JLA** artist Doug Mahnke joining returning writer Judd (**Outsiders**) Winick on the title.

REPORTEDLY, Avatar Press and/or Brian Pulido acquired the rights to Lady Death from CrossGen just prior to the Florida-based publisher filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

Whatever the facts of the matter, several publishers were discussing the possibility of inter-company crossovers for the former Chaos! Comics boss's leading bad girl.

DREAMWAVE is to debut a new **Warlands** series in January.

X-STATIX' Peter Milligan is Marvel's new **X-Men** writer. He takes over with the December-shipping #165.

DC/VERTIGO'S adaptation of *Constantine*, the movie based on **Hellblazer**, is to be written by **Superman: It's a Bird**'s Steven T Seagle and drawn by **Trekker** creator Ron Randall, who inked the writer's Vertigo series, **The Crusades**.

CHASE co-creator Dan Curtis Johnson is writing a graphic novel for AiT/Planet Lar.

Illustrated by newcomer Jeff Johns, **Moonshine** is said to be about "a gunfighter, a bartender, a prostitute, a ranch hand and a drunk who find out a terrible truth about what's going on in their town."

continued from last page

and the projects announced by the California-based co-operative certainly lacked the originality that had been evident in previous years.

What If...?

Hawaiian Dick creator B Clay Moore is writing an Image five-parter, which is being drawn by **Paradigm**'s Jeremy Haun and **Green Arrow**'s Ande Parks.

"**Battle Hymn** is my answer to the question, 'What would the government have done if superheroes really existed during World War II?' I mean... it's a safe bet that if Superman or the Human Torch were flying around the States in 1941, the government would be more than a little interested in harnessing their power to the war effort. But how would they do it? And what would be the ramifications," Moore asked rhetorically.

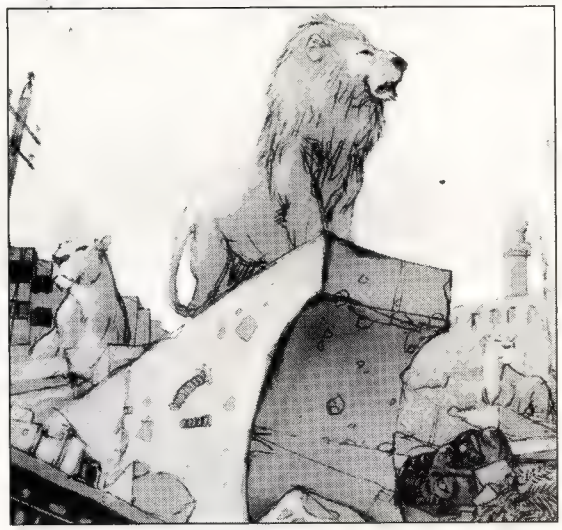
Slightly different is **Fear Agent**, an upcoming Image monthly written by Rick Remender and drawn by **The Walking Dead**'s Tony Moore, which follows the adventures of Heath Huston: Alien Exterminator.

"After being called in to clean up a space station with an infestation of 'Feeder' aliens, Heath finds himself caught in the middle of an inter-galactic civil war and Earth's fate in his hands" said Remender, probably best-known for as inker on Marvel's **Avengers**, adding "It's less trite than it sounds."

New universe

A surprise announcement came from **G.I. Joe** publisher Devil's Due, which is to become the latest to create its own superhero universe.

Less than a year ago the Chicago-based company was under the Image umbrella. Now independent, it has hired top name writers for its first four *Aftermath* titles: **Breakdown**, **Defex**, **Blade of Kumori** and **Infantry** which are written by Chuck (**Richard Dragon**) Dixon, **Teen Titans**' Marv Wolfman, Ron (**Green Lantern**) Marz and **WildCats**' Joe Casey respectively.



*Above: Niko Henrichon art from Vertigo's **Pride** graphic novel written by **Y: The Last Man**'s Brian K Vaughan. Having extended his DC exclusive by three years, **100 Bullets** writer Brian Azzarello is developing **Loveless**, an ongoing Vertigo Western drawn by Marcelo Frusin* [art top]. *Shown below is art from **Sloth**, a black and white Vertigo graphic novel by **Love & Rockets**' Gilbert Hernandez.*

But San Diego was not all about superheroes. Dark Horse announced the five-issue **Samurai: Heaven and Earth**, which is illustrated by **American Century**'s Luke Ross. It is written by Marz, who told **CI** it's about a samurai who meets the Three Musketeers adding wisely, "but that only addresses one aspect of the story."

Dead detectives

Inevitably, Vertigo announced some even less mainstream projects in the pipeline with Bill Willingham writing stories for a hardcover spin-off from his **Fables** series. An anthology, **1001 Nights of Snowfall** is to include art by Charles Vess among others.

Another spin-off, this time from **The Sandman**, is Jill Thompson's **Dead Boy Detectives**. It is a manga-esque story in the style of her **Death: At Death's Door**.

Moving in to less fantastic territory, Vertigo is adding another crime title – the five-issue **Angel Town** by author Gary Phillips and Shawn (**Detective Comics**) Martinbrough – plus a new western. Drawn by Marcelo (**Hellblazer**) Frusin, **Loveless** features Wes Cutter, who returns home after the Civil War to discover peace can be worse than war.

Pride of Lions

An ongoing series, **Loveless** is written by **100 Bullets**' Brian Azzarello while **Y: The Last Man**'s Brian K Vaughan is working on a graphic novel with **Barnum** artist Niko Henrichon. Their **Pride** tells of four lions on the loose in war-torn Iraq.

Another graphic novel, **Sloth** tells of a teenager who can only move at a snail's pace after emerging from a year-long self-induced coma. It is by **Love & Rockets**' Gilbert Hernandez.

WildStorm, DC's other imprint, brought the mainstream back to the fore with its announcement of **The Intimates**, which is set in a seminary where teenagers are taught to be superheroes.

An ongoing series created by Jim Lee and Joe Casey, it is written by Casey with art by **Vertigo Pop! Bangkok**'s Giuseppe Camuncoli.

Comic-Con International

CI columnist Chris Bunting makes a first trip to the Mecca of comics conventions to produce a whirlwind report on San Diego, California, 2004

What is Comic-Con? The official line is it's an annual showcase that helps promote a non-profit educational organisation dedicated to creating awareness of, and appreciation for, comics and related popular art forms.

The bottom line is that it's the mother of all comic conventions.

Set in the futuristic San Diego Convention Center in California, Comic-Con celebrated an impressive 35 years this year. But for me 2004 was my first visit.

On seeing the impressive and colossal venue in the distance, my first assumption was that a backroom or two would be given over to the con, in the same manner as some British events. On entering, I was shocked and pleasantly surprised to see the entire complex – bigger than some British shopping centres – dedicated solely to the convention.

When its Hall H can seat over 6000 people, you get an idea of the center's scale. And this wasn't a one-day wonder either: The con ran from 22nd-25th July with a preview night on the 21st. This is the kind of intensity, scale and duration UK cons can only envy and British fans can only dream of.

It felt rather dreamlike too, when moments after entering, I walked past a stall to see artistic legend Neal Adams sketching away. After taking a good few seconds to register it was actually him, the scope and glamour of this event quickly sank in, so I wasted no time in seeing what - and who - else was present.

Around one corner was actor Lou Ferrigno, casually and politely chatting to fans; and at Claypool Comics' booth writer Peter David provided a steady stream of autographs while telling me about the lack of publicity his non-Vertigo, non-DCU title. **Fallen Angel**, is receiving. Not far away, on the Bongo Comics stand, was *The Simpsons* creator, Matt Groening, not getting a moment's peace.

Steve Rude, Todd Nauck, Jeff Smith, Sergio Aragones, David Mack, to name a few, all had booths. But it didn't end there. Down every aisle appeared another familiar face: *Star Wars* actors past and present, including Carrie Fisher, signing autographs, while a ten-minute walk away in Artists' Alley were talents ranging from Gene Colan and Ron Lim to Steve Lieber and Glenn Fabry.

Big companies made their presence felt with visually-impressive stands: Marvel, DC, Slave Labor, Dark Horse, Top Cow, Hasbro, Antarctic Press, LucasArts, Mattel, New Line Cinema, and many more. And all this was only the lower level.

The upper floor was home to the plethora of special and exclusive events that were on offer. A Stan Lee signing session (no chance of getting near him even with my press pass!), *Buffy*'s Sarah Michelle Gellar, and a host of stars from the world of comics, TV and film. Britain's Simon Pegg was there too, proving immensely popular.

The bottom line is: it's the mother of all comics conventions.

There certainly was no shortage of panels attended by famous faces: Constantine with Keanu Reeves; Pixar's *Incredibles* with director Brad Bird; Neil Gaiman promoting *MirrorMask*; Marvel's **X-Men** panel with the likes of John Cassaday and Joe Quesada; an exclusive *Sin City* movie panel with Frank Miller and director Robert Rodriguez, while elsewhere Joss Whedon talked up *Serenity*. And this is barely scratching the surface.

Comic-based panels starred such luminaries as Garth Ennis, Jim Lee, Mike Mignola, Kurt Busiek, Mark Waid, Brian Michael Bendis, Bruce Jones, Walt and Louise Simonson, Erik Larsen, Geoff Johns, Dave Gibbons and Len Wein.

Other famous film faces around and about included Val Kilmer, Jude Law, Mark Hamill, and – publicising the prominent *Alien v Predator* – Lance Henriksen.

Signings were available from the voices behind the latest hot cartoons such as *Spongebob Squarepants* and *Batman: The Animated Series*, as well as by cast members from the likes of *Smallville*, *X Files* and *Buffy*.

Back with comics: small press, alternative, Star Trek, creative workshops, Disney, web comics, toys – even Britain's own **2000 AD** – each and all given a prestigious platform.

Anime and manga had a powerful presence, with publisher Tokyopop in particular making the most of it. Few con attendees were not holding onto one of their striking freebie goodie bags.

Then there were the Eisner Awards, masquerade competition, video games, art auction (headlined by Jim Lee), trivia contests ... the list could go on.

The sheer scale and offerings were truly staggering, but this was both the con's biggest strength and weakness: there was so much happening it was impossible to get to see it all.

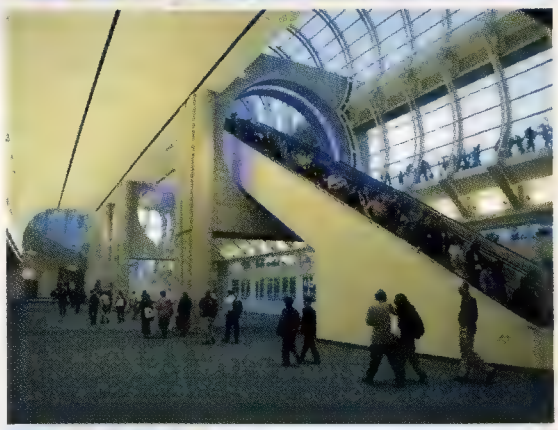
Over the two days I was there, I probably covered only 40% of the lower floor – described as being three times the size of an American football pitch – and missed a number of mouth-watering panels. There was dealer after dealer, comic pro after comic pro, dazzling display after dazzling display... a vast array on offer but, unless you're Madrox the Multiple Man, an impossible feat to take it all in. But hardly a scathing criticism, is it?

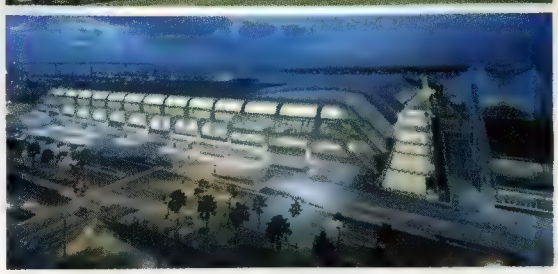
The convention itself was incredibly well-organised and smooth: it was attractive and clean, easily located, never a queue to get in nor a wait for a return coach, staff were helpful and friendly, and despite its vast scale, the center was easy to explore.

I learnt a few good lessons: always take a bottle of water and food, shop around when buying anything, and for those who believe the comic industry is in decline, come here to watch and learn. At times it was nearly crammed to spilling. As fast as people left, more took their place, and all dealers and publishers seemed to do a roaring trade.

Truth be told, it was exhausting trying to fit so much in, but it was more than worth it. Indeed, this article can't really do it justice for the lengths it went to, and what it provided for the fan. Just as there's too much to see and do at the con, there's simply too much to mention!

My advice to each and every comic fan is: if you ever get the chance to attend San Diego during Comic-Con: ***just go!***





San Diego Comic-Con, indoors, outdoors, by day and by night. In 2003: 70,000+ attended 285+ events (with more than 60% of them devoted to comics) and a film festival with 45 films. 2004 was bigger!

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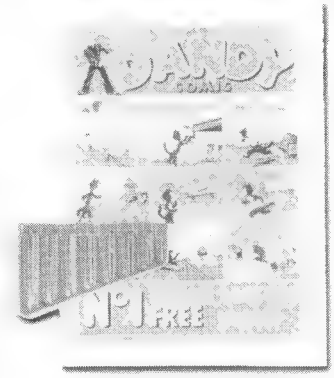
£10,000 for Dandy 1?

WHILE the value of old US comics has required such gimmicks as "slabbing" to boost an overexposed market, UK title values continue to soar.

Until relatively recently, little exposure had been given to the old British weeklies. That changed in 1992 when Malcolm Phillips set up Comic Book Postal Auctions and gave as strong an emphasis to UK as to US comic collectables.

In 1999, their £6859 sale of **Beano** 1 (1938) made the cover of **The Times**, but that was topped in March this year when a VG+ copy (without gift) achieved £12,100.

In their new catalogue they are now offering the highest grade copy known, FN+, of precursor **Dandy** No. 1 (1937), complete with its free gift.



www.compalcomics.com

With a no-gift G grade copy having recently sold for £7,261, another record looks set to be broken.

Brett Ewins makes comics comeback

THE Massachusetts-based publisher responsible for such high-quality collections as Steven Grant and Mike Zeck's **The Damed** and Jamie Delano's **2020 Visions** is producing its second book of Brett (Bad Company) Ewins' work.

Following the success of their collected **Johnny Nemo** graphic novel (by Pete Milligan, Brett Ewins and Steve Dillon), Cyberosia is publishing a second Brett Ewins book, featuring new material drawn by Ewins from scripts by such friends of the artist as Alan Grant, ex-**2000 AD** editor Alan McKenzie and, once more, Pete Milligan.

Of **The Dark Gate**, Ewins told **CI**, "It's pretty left field and off-the-wall," adding that it is his version of "one of those **Uncanny Tales** collections that we all read as kids" referring to the 1960s cheap black and white reprints of assorted US horror and SF shorts. But his book is actually far more than that.

Ewins disappeared from public view in the early 1990s, after writing and drawing for **Deadline**, the Tank Girl anthology he co-created and edited with Steve Dillon.

He suffered a serious breakdown from overwork and, following his and Pete Milligan's **Skreemer** for DC, could no longer work on anything with a deadline. His recovery took many years, during which time he had to turn down paid commissions from such high profile publishers as Penguin Books and DC Comics.

During this time, his way out of this inability to work under pressure was to start drawing up an anthology from scripts donated by friends and writers. He started the project in 1995 and completed it last year, "as an experiment in the comics medium and a testament to his friends and colleagues who contributed".

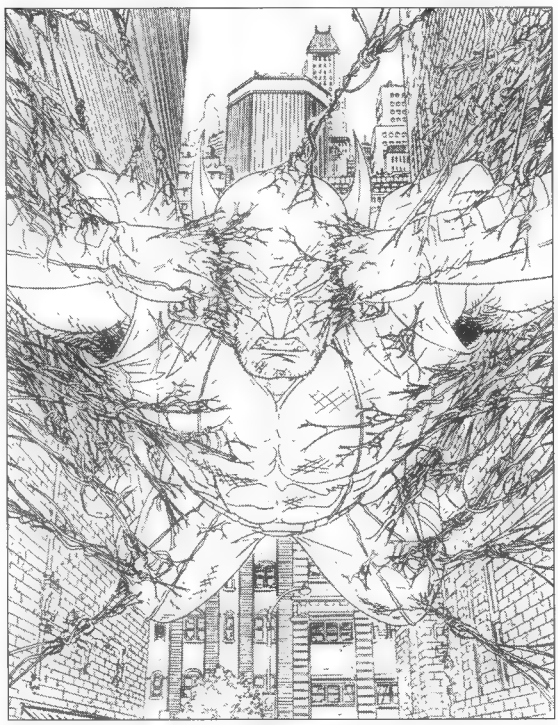
The Dark Gate, a 64-page $9.95 graphic novel anthology is due in shops soon.

Rising star resurrects Marvel's team-up title

Marvel signs hotshot new writer to exclusive deal then grants him access to its full range of characters for use in resurrection of 1970s title

ROBERT Kirkman may appear to be an overnight sensation but the writer has been involved in the comics industry for a few years.

He first emerged in 2000 with **Battle Pope**, a cult hit which he self-published under his own Funk-o-Tron label. Moving to Image in 2002, he wrote the four-issue **Super Patriot: America's Fighting Force** for Erik Larsen's *Highbrow Entertainment* but it was his own titles – which included **Tech Jacket**, **Invincible** and **The Walking Dead** – through which his reputation began to grow.



*Pictured: Scott Kolins pencil pages from the first issue of the revived **Marvel Team-Up**. Launched in 1972, the original series was intended to alternately feature Spider-Man and the Human Torch with a guest but Spider-Man soon became a regular fixture. Cancelled in 1985 after 150 issues, it was replaced by **Web of Spider-Man**.*

Having recently written a four-issue **Captain America** serial that tied in with the *Avengers Disassembled* storyline, he was next tagged to write all five **2099** one-shots for this September's *Marvel Knights* events.

Kirkman has now signed exclusively to Marvel where he and artist Scott (**The Flash**) Kolins are to relaunch **Marvel Team-Up**, which ran 150 issues from 1972.

Entire Universe

Asked by **CI** what attracted him to the project, the writer responded enthusiastically, "It's **Marvel Team-Up**. It's the entire Marvel Universe, at my beck and call month in and month out. This is an opportunity that I couldn't pass up. This is a dream gig. On top of all that, I get to work with Scott Kolins. I was all over this project from day one."

Intended as a title on which Spider-Man and the Human Torch would share top billing, the original **Marvel Team-Up** swiftly became Spider-Man's exclusive domain. Kirkman is not planning to use the same policy on the revival. "I can use whoever I want. It's been recommended to me that I try to use Spider-Man and Wolverine often... but it's not required of me. I'm going to be having fun with this.

"After a while I want to let the book dictate who appears," added the 25-year old Kentuckian. "I plan on using everyone – everyone – before I'm done with this thing. I love the characters of the Marvel Universe. This book is going to be a hoot."

Villains to the fore

Kirkman, who said he was approached by editor Tom Brevoort to take on the project, is not bothered by the absence of a top name hero to keep the readers coming back each month. He plans to achieve that by other means. "This book is going to be a massive tapestry of subplots and continued stories. We're going to see the stories weave through character after character as things go on. This book will be about villains almost more than is it about heroes. We're going to be trying a lot of new things."

New mutant

Among the team-ups the writer has set for the first few issues up are Hulk/Iron Man, Fantastic Four/Dr Strange, Captain America/Black Widow and Punisher/Blade but he is kicking off the new **MTU** with two headliners. "The first two issues focus on Wolverine and Spider-Man getting tied up in the life of a new young mutant and all kinds of madness springing from that.

"But that's all part of a larger story running from #3-6 that introduces two new villains and sets up some subplots that will be running through the entire series," explained Kirkman, whose contract allows him to continue **Invincible** and **The Walking Dead** at Image.

Kirkman says he plans to stay on the title as long as Marvel will have him. "I'd love to be writing this book five years from now. Having the entire Marvel Universe to play with ensures I'll never run out of ideas."

***Marvel Team-Up** #1, priced $2.25, November 3.*

In Brief

FORMER **New X-Men** writer Grant Morrison is to answer questions set by fans during an interview conducted by Jonathan Ross at the second London Comic Festival, which is to be held at the Holiday Inn London Bloomsbury over the weekend of October 22-24.

Questions for **The Invisibles** and **Seaguy** creator should be emailed to grant@comicfestival.co.uk

Entrance to the event – which also features the first UK appearance by **Powers** artist Michael Avon Oeming – is £5 plus a further £5 for the Morrison interview. Tickets and further details can be obtained from *www.comicfestival.co.uk*

BURLYMAN Entertainment has a second volume of **The Matrix Comics** scheduled for November.

CI was told it is to include "some new, never before seen content, mixed with never before in print web material." Paul Chadwick, Bill, Sienkiewicz, Steve Skroce and Geof Darrow are among the contributors.

30 DAYS of Night looks to have the makings of a franchise for writer Steve Niles.

The current horrormeister is to write three prose novels based in the nightmarish world of his IDW four-parter, which has already spawned several comicbook spin-offs including an ongoing series and an in-development movie.

The first book, **Rumors of the Undead**, is to be published by Pocket Books in August 2005, with the second and third novels following in the first half of 2006.

AMONG the Damned is writer Scott Ciencin's 48-page follow up to **Dying Inside**, his five-issue spin-off from Konami's harrowing *Silent Hill* computer game.

Drawn by **2000 AD**'s *Apocalypse Now* artist, Shaun Thomas, the $7.49 oneshot chronicles a meeting between a young soldier suffering from survivor's guilt and a doomed soul. It ships in November.

MARK Smylie is to release a role-playing game based on his epic fantasy series, **Artesia**.

Published by the writer/painter's own Archaia Studio Press, the initial 192-page handbook, **Artesia: Adventures in the Known World**, ships in December, priced $29.95.

IS JOE Kelly and Ted McKeever's **Enginehead** jinxed?

Not only has the eight-parter been cut back to six issues but now the concluding episode has been removed from DC's schedule. Originally set to ship on September 1, the $2.50 #6 is to be resolicited at a later date.

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*NEWLY-installed **Swamp Thing** writer Joshua Dysart is having a dig at the present incumbent of the White House in a black and white oneshot from Atomic Basement Comics. He told **CI** that **Tex** – on which he is aided and abetted by former **Catwoman** artist Brad Rader* [see art above] *– is an original work of satire about George W Bush as a superhero. The $3.99 comic includes a 24-page story plus a five-page appendix "illustrating virtually every act of criminal politics performed by this administration in the last four years." Shipping in November but available now from www.bushcomic.com, it comes with a free CD featuring six original songs by LA funk band Jacaranda.*

Stan Lee makes another comeback

THE CO-CREATOR of the Marvel Universe has not had much luck since he was pushed aside by Marvel.

Stan Lee Media, his multi-media/ Internet entertainment enterprise spectacularly crashed and burned in 2002 with co-founder Peter Paul being accused of fraud.

Since then Lee has set up Pow Entertainment but, while this new venture has sold a few options, the only one to see the light of day so far is the ill-fated Stripperella, an adult cartoon which was killed off after just a handful of episodes.

Lee is now returning to his comics roots writing **Alexa**, an occasional series for Byron Preiss's ibooks. It stars a top comicbook artist, a woman who becomes a superhero.

Shown right is Chris Malgrain's art for the 48-page first volume, which ships in February, priced $6.95.

24 hours for 2005

ABOUT Comics has chosen May 23 as the date for next year's 24 Hour Comic Day – the day on which cartoonists around the world are to attempt to write and draw a 24-page comics story in 24 straight hours.

"The event really needs to be on a Saturday, so that people can spend their 24 hours and still have time to recover before work or school on Monday," explained About Comics publisher Nat Gertler, who was inspired by Scott McCloud to found the event. "Because of that, we couldn't keep the April 24 date we used for this year's inaugural event. But by having the 24 hours start on the 23rd, it actually ends on the 24th."

For further details, log on to www.24HourComics.com

Deadshot is back

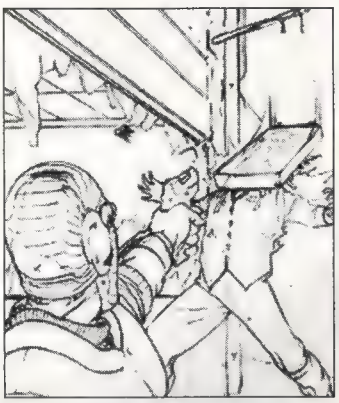
HE IS to Batman what Bullseye is to Daredevil but Floyd Lawton, the expert marksman more commonly known as Deadshot, had been around 26 years before the Marvel villain debuted in 1976.

Even so, Deadshot's first appearance [as *The Man who Replaced Batman* in 1950's **Batman** #59] was also almost his last – he was not seen again until 1977 when his reappearance was possibly triggered by Bullseye's popularity. He has since served as a regular member of the Suicide Squad during the late '80s and early '90s. He has also continued to cause occasional problems for Batman but his profile has dropped since 1988 when he was given his own four-part series.

In December, *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* writer Chris Gage, IDW's **Gene Pool** penciller Steven Cummings and former **Daredevil** inker and Marvel Knights co-founder Jimmy Palmiotti are planning to push him back into the DC spotlight with their five-issue **Deadshot: Urban Renewal**.

"The series is about what happens when a man with a death wish finds something to live for," explained Gage, the TV writer making his comics debut. "Along the way, Deadshot will deal with a superhero who wants to put a stop to his activities; a supervillain – and former partner – who thinks Deadshot is carving out his own territory and wants a piece of it and the emergence of his own long-buried emotions.

"If you'll forgive the Hollywood-speak," the writer added, "I describe it as *The Professional* meets *Shane*."



Above: A Steven Cummings-pencilled frame from an interior page from the first issue of DC's ***Deadshot: Urban Renewal*** *five-parter.*

CI #174 competition winners

IN CI #174, 10 readers were offered the opportunity to each win a copy of the new Paul Gravett book, **Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics**. The winners were:

S Ceccorulli, Fano, Italy
Andrew Clench, Gravesend
Jeff Dunn, Southampton
John Hughes, Eastbourne
P. Lewis, Chesham
Adam Ryan, Wallington
Alan Thompson, Didcot
Alice Watts, Brighton
Jonathan Weeks, Camberwell
D. Wood, Camphill, Northampton

In the issue's second competition, to celebrate Dynamic Forces tenth anniversary, 10 readers had the chance to win a DF litho reproducing John Romita Senior's art for the cover to **Amazing Spider-Man** #50. The winners were:

Rich Hanson, London
Colin Johnson, Cardiff
Bill Walters, Hartlepool
Andrew Smith, Bristol
Tony Wright, Leeds
Elaine Conway, Birmingham
Mr D. Prentice, Preston
Damien Jones, Swansea
Andy West, Manchester
Tommy Jennings, Edinburgh

Reader votes scored the 10 most popular sections of the issue as:

1 News International (18.1%)
2 Reviews (15.5%)
3= Letters/Comic Cuts (7.5%)
3= Novel Graphics (7.5%)
5 NetWorks (6.2%)
6 Advance Listings (6.0%)
7 Sez Dez (5.8%)
8 The Originals preview (5.2%)
9= Comment (4.7%)
9= In the Gutter (4.7%)

The highest scoring section as the least popular feature was "None, they're all fine" – very encouraging at 30.6%, with In the Gutter second at 16.7% and Comics Economics third at 13.9%. So you don't like gossip, and facts bore you. You're an odd bunch out there.

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Is TV to get new genre of procedural show thanks to Image's Small Gods?

Mike Conroy's Frame to Frame

Charting the latest news between films and comics

KEVIN Alter's certainly not one to let the grass grow under his feet. Since quitting as head of Energy Entertainment's comicbook division to go solo, he has been actively acquiring properties although it's interesting to note what catches his eye.

While at Energy he was responsible for shepherding a number of projects screenward. Among them were Parker Smart's self-published **CiCi, Misplaced** – an Image/Devil's Due title – and **The Legend of Isis**, a TidalWave Studio series that bounced from Image to Avatar and into oblivion via Angel's Gate with just one issue under its belt. Alter also handled **Freemind**, one of the handful of superhero titles published by Future Comics – and whatever happened to that much-vaunted outfit?

Psychic 1% on TV?

It's difficult to decide where Alter's head is at. Is he looking to snag interesting concepts or do cheap and available enter into the equation?

Whichever it is, he's continuing as he started now that he's hung his Alter Ego Entertainment shingle on the door. Within the past few months, he's picked up the rights to several similar properties to those he acquired for Energy.

The latest is Jason Rand and Juan E Ferreyra's **Small Gods**, an Image series that should be up to #3 by the time this issue of **CI** hits the stands. It is set on a world without superheroes although approximately 1% of the population possess psychic powers – but they're just ordinary people, living ordinary lives.

"When I first heard about this property, I knew I wanted to be involved in adapting it, but it wasn't until I came to the conclusion I'd want to pursue it as a TV show more than a film, that I approached Jason," Alter stated.

"The series is a world, a shared universe if you will, and each arc features new and exciting characters. I thought the best medium to service Jason's material was television," he continued. "The problem was that I didn't want to do an anthology series, as they're both a hard sell and hard to keep on the air. Then I had a thought...

"The first arc, which would be the most readily accessible material to buyers and talent, is a crime story about a precognitive cop," he explained. "His abilities make him more efficient at doing his job. It's that grittiness – such as the 'tel-emp' [telepathic empath] con-artist in the [as-yet unpublished] second arc who's obviously on the opposite side of the law – that made me realise we had the material to develop a TV series in the vein of the hottest trend on network television right now: a procedural show. Albeit one with a genre twist."

Familiarity factor

It's an intriguing idea but isn't it the lure of watching forensic or cold case detectives at work while knowing they are not investigating real crimes that makes procedural shows so popular? It's not likely the same enthusiasm would be mustered up for detectives – or criminals – with psychic powers.

Also, with each serial focusing on different protagonists, what's the hook that'll bring audiences back every week? If there's one thing certain about episodic TV it's that people like to see familiar faces. They don't want to have to get to 'know' a totally new batch of characters every week.

Look at something like Warren Ellis's **Global Frequency**, which Warner Bros is currently turning into a TV show. While superficially similar to **Small Gods** in that each story features different agents, it does at least have a core cast of characters to keep the familiarity level up.

Industry of War

And then, by way of example, there's *The Agency*, which can leave

Above: James Vansanto and Michael Landry from Jordan Rankin's ***Industry of War****. Top:* ***Small Gods'*** *protagonists Owen Young and John Meyer; art by Juan E Ferreyra.*

viewers wondering if the CIA has any other field agents.

An absence of familiar characters is one of the reason why, as Alter himself observes, anthology shows are a hard sell and hard to keep on air.

Getting back to Alter's plans, another Image title he's picked up, this time in conjunction with *Total Recall* and *Minority Report* producer Ronald Shusett, is **Industry of War**.

Sci-fi twist

Created by Jordan Raskin – best-known for Top Cow's **Ripclaw** – it follows a pair of undercover military agents who are trying to track down missing malfunctioning bio-symbiotic weaponry which was created for use by foot soldiers. But the armaments are already on the streets.

The series debuts as a flipbook with Mark Texeira's two-issue. **Pscythe** on September 8. It is based on a screenplay by Raskin and Andrew Lelling and, according to Alter, "reads like a high-concept Jerry Bruckheimer action-thriller, but with a sci-fi twist."

"Balls to the wall"

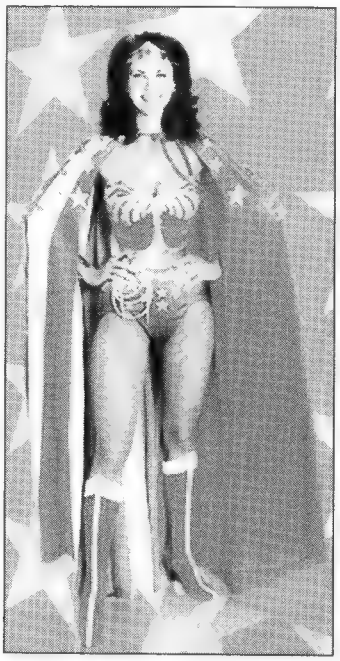
Raskin, who is writing the script with Shusett, commented, "I originally conceived this project to be one mother of a comicbook that would read like a balls to the walls action film with a brain. I always felt if I could get it out there, it's something that Hollywood executives and video game companies would be climbing over one another to get the rights to. So far, it's nice to see my vision and hard work to be bearing some fledgling fruit."

Fledgling? How about 'egg' as in don't count your chickens...?

Adding in his Energy projects and Image's **Sword of Dracula** and Devil's Due's **Hack/Slash**, which he has also optioned since setting up Alter Ego, these latest acquisitions mean Alter has over half-a-dozen comicbook-based properties on the go and not one of them is anywhere close to going into production.

Over the years *Frame to Frame* has monitored hundreds of comics to

Above: Will Eisner's art for the cover to ***The Spirit*** *#28 [Kitchen Sink, 1987].*



WHILE Jennifer Lopez becomes the latest Hollywood beauty to campaign for the title role in Joel Silver's still in development ***Wonder Woman*** *movie, TV's best-known Amazon Princess, Lynda Carter* [above]*, is lined up to play a high school principal in the superhero family comedy,* Sky High *[see And finally...]*

movie deals. Many of them fade away, probably an incredibly high percentage. It will be interesting to see how many of Alter's batch make it to a multiplex – or TV – near you.

Will Eisner

The Spirit is heading for the big screen under the auspices of Odd Lot Entertainment. The production company behind *Hooligans* and *The Wedding Planner* has teamed up with Michael Uslan – a producer whose credits include *Batman*, its three sequels and *Swamp Thing* as well as *Catwoman* and the forthcoming *Constantine* and *Batman Begins* – to feature Will Eisner's signature creation in a "handsomely crafted, stylised, character-driven tale".

It's not time to panic yet but the main players' track records do include a surfeit of duds. Not that some of those didn't make lots of money but...

Still, it's doubtful Odd Lot and Uslan could do a worse job than director Michael Schultz' rarely-seen pilot for an unsold *Spirit* TV series. That aired in the US in 1987 with Sam J Jones – of *Flash Gordon* [1980] fame – in the title role.

And finally...

Given the success of *Spider-Man*, *X-Men* et al, it's hardly surprising that Hollywood has begun to create its own superheroes.

With Pixar's *The Incredibles* set for a November release, Disney is getting ready to shoot *Sky High*, a family comedy about a high school for superpowered teens in a world where superheroes are an everyday occurrence. The cast is to include Lynda (*Wonder Woman*) Carter as the school's principal.

Frame to Frame Review

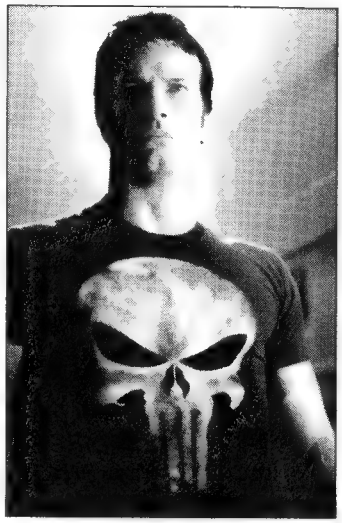
"God's going to sit this one out."

IT WAS almost inevitable that first-time director Jonathan Hensleigh's *Punisher* would be compared with the 1989 version starring Dolph Lundgren in the title role. The good news is that it's a better movie.

The bad news is there's not much in it and the new film, which sees *Dreamcatcher*'s Thomas Jane don the skull shirt, is seriously flawed in its own right.

In many ways Jane is just right for the part. Athletic without being muscle-bound, he walks through the movie showing little emotion, dead to the world like the man who survived the massacre of his entire family he is. Unfortunately, while his interpretation is meant to be mean, moody and suffering, it comes across as wooden, superficial and boring.

Jane lacks screen presence and the Punisher lacks depth. As portrayed, the driven, murderous vigilante fails to engage your interest let alone your sympathy.



Above: Thomas Jane as Frank Castle aka The Punisher.

2-D Travolta

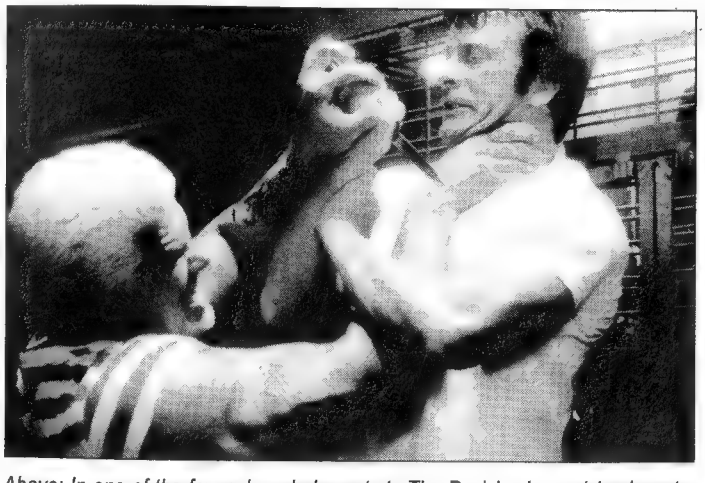
Much the same can be said of John Travolta. As evidenced by *Broken Arrow* and *Swordfish*, he can play up the villainy but here he's amazingly subdued as Howard Saint, a two-dimensional villain who has Castle's family wiped out after his own son is killed during Castle's last mission as an undercover cop. A tad better is Will Patton, who plays Saint's sadistic consiglieri.

Little can be said about the rest of the cast although at two hours plus, *The Punisher* is overly long and leaving the comedy duo – a guy with a serious weight problem and his heavily-pierced buddy – and the quasi love interest on the cutting room floor would have helped immensely.

The movie opens well but rapidly goes down hill once the Punisher's *raison d'etre* has been established. It's full of plot holes from the total lack of police presence to the mysterious appearance/disappearance of Candelaria – the man with supposed supernatural powers, who saves our hero's life – and Castle's ability to roam the streets with impunity. Then there's the almost complete absence of any extras – everyone who appears on screen is either a player or cannon fodder.

Excessively violent, *The Punisher* leaves a lot to be desired even as a run of the mill action/revenge flick.

When Castle hits the vengeance trail, Candelaria tells him to go with God. He responds, "God's going to sit this one out." You should too.



Above: In one of the few acknowledgments to The Punisher*'s comicbook roots, Thomas Jane as Frank Castle struggles against the seemingly invincible assassin* [left] *known only as The Russian (played here by former WWE wrestler Kevin Nash).*

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What a difference a decade makes

Talking Shop with Stephen Holland

Reminding people there's a real mainstream out there

THIS IS a little premature, I grant you, because Page 45 doesn't celebrate its 10th anniversary until October, but it's set me thinking about how much has changed since we first said, "Er, the shelves'll be up tomorrow. Do you mind jogging up the stairs, because we've dozens of graphic novels already for sale in several big heaps on the floor?"

Well, the shelves are now up, for a start.

In fact I can't think of much that *hasn't* improved: there's a minimum wage (although everyone I know appears to be on it, which surely wasn't the point), the Internet is providing excellent accessibility for those interested in graphic novels (or indeed graphic anything else) and – this I consider little short of revolutionary – you no longer need to lick your own stamps.

And although inflation has taken its toll both on our rent and the price of the average superhero comic (was $1.50, now between $2.25 and $2.99), most black and white comics have bucked the natural trend. **Strangers In Paradise** has risen but 20 cents and Britain's own **Strangehaven** is the same $2.95/£2.20 that its first issue was ten years ago.

More extraordinary still, the price of a graphic novel in the UK has either remained stable or plummeted. In July 1996 Marvel was offering **X-Men: X-Tinction Agenda** tpb at £20. Ten years on, it's just £12.99, and if that doesn't deserve a 'bloody hell!' I don't know what does.

Of course, the most important shift is the quality of the material on offer, the breadth of its subject matter, and its consistent availability on any decent shop floor.

I wince at the world I remember when superheroes were an unreadable mess of illiterate gibberish, lazy speed lines and gritted teeth (**Fantastic Force**, **Extreme Justice**) and foil-enhanced covers were so prevalent that Marvel's Jan 2005 catalogue devoted a whole section to them (ten titles including **Fantastic Four** #398 – how random is *that*?), and there was comparatively little fiction, autobiography or adult fantasy on offer outside of a handful of self-publishers plus Vertigo and Fantagraphics.

Fortunately **Acme Novelty Library** #1 was about to appear, bringing in all manner of arty types, **Bone** was on the verge of going into orbit, and there was a sudden epidemic of books beginning with "Stra…" (**Stray Bullets**, **Strangers In Paradise** and **Strangehaven**).

Thankfully all these kept us going until a new generation of vibrant thinkers and craftsmen arrived, both in the real mainstream sector and in the superhero arena when Marvel hired Joe Quesada, who swiftly commissioned some serious quality.

In the meantime graphic novels were on the rise and it was a question of 'Be careful what you ask for!' When we opened there were so lamentably few tpbs to make money from, that we were able to dedicate three whole shelves to **Bone** alone (in those days Jeff Smith kept the issues in print, rather than books). Since then, with over 2,000 tpbs on sale, we've added 50% more shelving but barely have room to keep more than 10% of our stock fully face-out (a crime, given that this is an overwhelmingly visual medium).

> I wince at the world I remember, when superheroes were an unreadable mess of illiterate gibberish, lazy speed lines and gritted teeth...

The biggest nightmare in the bad old days was trying to keep these in stock, because distributors failed to do so. Diamond was so lax that we had to buy direct from publishers and smaller US distributors. It got to the point one Christmas – I kid you not – that we had to offer to bankroll Diamond UK to buy in trades so that other shops could have access to books like **Love & Rockets** and **Cerebus** throughout the prime buying season. I recently discovered the forgotten correspondence on our computer. In the event Diamond stocked the books without our guarantee, then – miraculously – announced their best tpb sales to date. I thought a word of thanks was in order; evidently they didn't.

So what changed? Pat Sullivan. Pat took over stock control at Diamond UK, and I'm absolutely convinced that one of the main reasons you can now pick up whatever you want whenever you want, boils down to Pat. Given how much more stock there is to control now, I reckon the man deserves a medal. Every single year.

Of course not everyone *likes* change and in spite of DC's fine example, not everyone 'gets' it. Ten years ago Marvel treated the reprint collection like a periodical rather than the ideal perennial for the casual browser, so they printed to order. And although there has recently been a massive infusion of reprint material, the holes in the range are now so large it looks like a haphazard airing cupboard full of lace tablecloths. Truncated from **Diamond Daily** 09/08/04 (don't shoot the messenger): "Marvel is going back to press on Grant Morrison's **New X-Men**, one of the most important runs on Marvel's mighty mutants in the past decade!" I'm not arguing, but they then list four books from the series, and announce: "Copies *may not be available for long*, so confirm quantities today!" Italics mine, but that pretty much says it all.

The last but by no means least profound shift has been in the level of censorship. You may not be aware of this, but in 1995 it was so capricious that Knockabout were prosecuted by Customs & Excise for re-importing copies of a Robert Crumb book which they had successfully sold in the UK for years, provoking our own Dez Skinn into jumping from a plane (with a parachute!) in order to raise money for their defence.

And on one of the occasions that we attempted to import copies of Roberta Gregory's **Naughty Bits**, they withheld several issues just so they could burn them. Back then it seemed that the people this country had fought against in the last World War were patrolling our borders.

So here we are in 2004, and there are literally thousands of comics to choose from whenever you want them, most the same price that they were ten years ago.

These are the Golden Years, and I for one am loving every single second of them.

For the ocassion he doesn't namedrop, Stephen Holland runs Nottingham's Page 45 with Mark Simpson and Tom Rosin.

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OFFICIAL EAGLE AWARDS VOTING FORM FOR MATERIAL PUBLISHED DURING 2003

North America

1/1 FAVOURITE COLOUR COMICBOOK
- ☐ Fantastic Four
- ☐ Planetary
- ☐ The Ultimates

1/2 FAVOURITE BLACK & WHITE COMICBOOK
- ☐ Bone
- ☐ Cerebus
- ☐ Queen & Country

1/3 FAVOURITE NEW COMICBOOK OF 2003
- ☐ 1602
- ☐ Conan
- ☐ The Losers

British

3/1 FAVOURITE BRITISH COMIC
- ☐ Judge Dredd Megazine
- ☐ Striker
- ☐ Warhammer

3/2 FAVOURITE COMIC STRIP TO APPEAR IN A UK COMIC OR MAGAZINE
- ☐ Judge Dredd (2000 AD, Judge Dredd Megazine)
- ☐ Sid the Sexist (Viz)
- ☐ Bash Street Kids (The Beano)

3/3 FAVOURITE BRITISH SMALL PRESS TITLE
- ☐ Jack Staff
- ☐ Thrud the Barbarian
- ☐ Strangehaven

Internet

4/1 FAVOURITE COMICS-RELATED WEBSITE
- ☐ Comic Book Resources
- ☐ Comicon.com
- ☐ Silver Bullet

4/2 FAVOURITE COMICS E-ZINE
- ☐ Newsarama
- ☐ The Pulse
- ☐ Sequential Tart

4/3 FAVOURITE WEB-BASED COMIC
- ☐ Marc Hempel's Naked Brain
- ☐ Mike Snart
- ☐ PvP

International

2/1 FAVOURITE COMICS WRITER
- ☐ Brian Michael Bendis
- ☐ Mark Millar
- ☐ J. Michael Straczynski

2/2 FAVOURITE COMICS WRITER/ARTIST
- ☐ Mike Mignola
- ☐ Jeff Smith
- ☐ Chris Ware

2/3 FAVOURITE COMICS ARTIST: PENCILS
- ☐ John Cassaday
- ☐ Andy Kubert
- ☐ Jim Lee

2/4 FAVOURITE COMICS ARTIST: INKS
- ☐ Jimmy Palmiotti
- ☐ Kevin Nowlan
- ☐ Scott Williams

2/5 FAVOURITE COMICS ARTIST: PAINTED ART
- ☐ Gabriel del Otto
- ☐ Glenn Fabry
- ☐ Alex Ross

2/6 FAVOURITE COLOURIST
- ☐ Chris Blythe
- ☐ Laura Martin
- ☐ Dave Stewart

2/7 FAVOURITE COMICS EDITOR
- ☐ Axel Alonso
- ☐ Tom Brevoort
- ☐ Joey Cavalieri

2/8 FAVOURITE MANGA COMIC
- ☐ Battle Royale
- ☐ Blade of the Immortal
- ☐ Oh! My Goddess

2/9 FAVOURITE EUROPEAN COMIC
- ☐ Blacksad (Dargaud, France)
- ☐ El Vibora (Ediciones La Cúpula, Spain)
- ☐ Tex (Bonelli, Italy)

2/10 FAVOURITE COMICS CHARACTER
- ☐ Batman
- ☐ Hellboy
- ☐ Jessica Jones (Alias)

2/11 FAVOURITE COMICS STORY
- ☐ Conan: The Legend (#0; Busiek/Nord)
- ☐ Daredevil: Hardcore (#46-50; Bendis/Maleev)
- ☐ Gotham Central: Half a Life (#6-10; Rucka/Lark)

2/12 CHARACTER MOST WORTHY OF OWN TITLE
- ☐ Captain Britain
- ☐ Doctor Strange
- ☐ Marvelman/Miracleman

2/13 FAVOURITE SUPPORTING CHARACTER
- ☐ Phoney Bone (Bone)
- ☐ Doc Brass (Planetary)
- ☐ Mary Jane Watson (Spider-Man)

2/14 FAVOURITE COMICS COVER
- ☐ Global Frequency #7 [Brian Wood]
- ☐ Hulk: Gray #1 [Tim Sale]
- ☐ JLA: Liberty and Justice [Alex Ross]

2/15 FAVOURITE COMICS VILLAIN
- ☐ Doctor Doom (Fantastic Four)
- ☐ Hush (Batman)
- ☐ The Icicle (JSA)

2/16 FAVOURITE GRAPHIC NOVEL
- ☐ Blankets (Craig Thompson)
- ☐ The Fixer (Joe Sacco)
- ☐ Sgt Rock (Brian Azzarello/Joe Kubert)

2/17 FAVOURITE REPRINT COMPILATION
- ☐ Absolute Authority
- ☐ Chronicles of Conan
- ☐ The Spirit Archives

2/18 FAVOURITE NEWSPAPER STRIP
- ☐ Maakies (Tony Millionaire)
- ☐ Mutts (Patrick McDonnell)
- ☐ Spooner (Ted Dawson)

2/19 FAVOURITE MAGAZINE ABOUT COMICS
- ☐ Comic Book Artist
- ☐ Comics International
- ☐ The Comics Journal

2/20 FAVOURITE COMICS-RELATED BOOK
- ☐ The Art of Mike Mignola
- ☐ Sandman: King of Dreams (Alisa Kwitney)
- ☐ Mythology: The DC Comics Art of Alex Ross

2/21 FAVOURITE COMICS-BASED MOVIE OR TV
- ☐ American Splendor
- ☐ Smallville
- ☐ X2: X-Men United

2/22 FAVOURITE COMICS-RELATED MERCHANDISE
- ☐ Dr Doom Bust Diamond Select)
- ☐ Heroclix Xplosion (Wizkids)
- ☐ Kingdom Come action figures (DC Select; second series)

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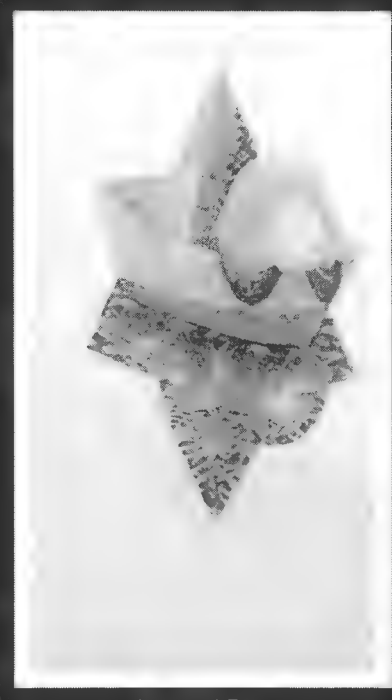

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Advance Listings

READERS: You can use this Advance Listings *section as an order form with your direct market store or mail order supplier. Simply mark the items you require, copy or remove these pages (or list them on a separate piece of paper) and give it to your supplier, together with a note of your name, address and phone number to guarantee not missing any of the new titles being published. Certain suppliers may not accept standing orders, so check with them first. All prices of US titles listed are in dollars. Import prices are usually converted at a rate of $1.00 = 85p UK sterling. Shipping dates given are the earliest date product will reach stores. All dates, prices and information are assumed to be accurate as provided by publishers.* *Compiled by Jim Hannah with thanks to Kieron Mullens*

The following are 32 page colour titles unless stated

RELEASED AND ON SALE IN

OCTOBER

Aardvark-Vanaheim

Following Cerebus 2 (various) Features the first of Dave Sim's About Last Issue columns, in which he responds to topics presented in Following Cerebus 1, plus more 40pg b&w $3.95

Abstract Studio

Strangers in Paradise 69 (Terry Moore) Katchoo is suspicious of Tambi's reluctance to find David for her. When Katchoo confronts her stepsister about the matter, the terrible truth comes out. 24pg b&w $2.95

Amaze Ink/ Slave Labor

Bill & Ted's Most Excellent Adventures Vol 2 (Evan Dorkin; tpbk) Our two time-hopping headbangers are on the run from a gang from Hell and stuck on a planet of superheroes. 168pg b&w $13.95

one-shot **Bear Volume 1: Immortal** (Jamie Smart; tpbk) Collects Bear Hurts, Bear Trips, Bear B, Bear Rawks, and Bear Vengeance in one fine lump of chuzz. 144pg b&w $14.95

new **Cocopiazo** 1 (Daniel Warner) John Victory was never born, he simply appeared one night ordering rounds and slapping asses in a dimly lit cocktail lounge. This is his story. 24pg b&w $2.95

Ghouly Boys 3 (various) Life's no bag of candy when you're the son of the infamous Boogie-man and you're never allowed to go outside and play. 24pg b&w $2.95

Serenity Rose 5 (Aaron A) Serenity Rose finally comes face to face with her idol, Vicious Whisper. 24pg b&w $2.95

Antarctic Press

Angels 750 #5 (of 9; Ted Nomura) The Angels join a motorcycle racing team, causing problems with their relationships. b&w $2.99

Gold Digger 57 (Fred Perry) Will Ace join Night Flight as an in-law for outlaws, or will his girlfriend Penny, with her pilot's license, save him in time? $2.99

one-shot **I Hunt Monsters Pocket Manga** Vol 1 (Rod Espinosa & Craig Babiar; tpbk) Discovering he is heir to the legacy of the Warlock clan, William Warlock assumes the guardianship against the forces of the underworld too late to prevent the escape of the Queen of the Undead and her minions. 144pg b&w $9.99

I Hunt Monsters 8 (Rod Espinosa & Craig Babiar) Will, Aarna and Delilah make a run for the border for a little Cinco de Mayhem, hunting Chupacabra in Mexico. b&w $2.99

Neotopia Vol 4 #3 (Rod Espinosa) Now allied with the Lesazonians and the spirit folk, Nalyn gathers back the remnants of the Mathenian army. $2.99

Ninja High School 121 (Katie Bair) When Yoji finds Lokki homeless and down on her luck, it results in an alliance between the blind samurai and the mischievous Norse demigod. b&w $2.99

new **Panzer: 1946** #1 (Ted Nomura) Eisenhower has been killed over Normandy in June 1944. German armour counterattacks defeat Montgomery and Patton at Ardennes, the Nazis retake Belgium, and the war goes on until 1946! 48pg b&w .. $5.95

Quagmire USA 5 (Ben Dunn) The evil wizard Baschur has tricked everyone, escaped his enemies, and conquered the small town of Quagmire en route to taking over everything! b&w $2.99

new **Twilight X: Storm Pocket Manga** Vol 1 (Joseph Wight) Caught in the final battle of WWIII between Old America, the fascists, and the incredible power of the mysterious Elysium, Jed Saxon faces not just his own destruction but the loss of his only friends. 144pg b&w . $9.99

You Can Draw Manga 10 (various) Tips, tricks, and step-by-step instructions continue you on the road to being a menacing manga machine! b&w $4.95

Archie Comics

one-shot **The Adventures of the Fly** Vol 1 (various; tpbk) Tommy Troy is a young boy whose world is turned upside down when he meets an emissary of the Fly World and is given a special ring that magically transforms him into the superhuman Fly! 96pg $12.95

Archie 552 (various) There's a fashion faux pas when Archie advises Mr Lodge on which style jacket would make the perfect gift for Veronica. $2.19

Betty 142 (various) Word gets out that Betty is writing a Dear John letter, and every one of her friends is paranoid that it might be for them. $2.19

Betty & Veronica Spectacular 68 (Dan Parent) Archie feels like he's lost control when Betty and Veronica give each other remote control Archie dolls for Christmas! $2.19

Jughead 161 (Craig Boldman & Rex Lindsey) Can Jughead get his rhythm back or will The Archies have to carry on to the beat of another drummer? $2.19

Sabrina the Teenage Witch 62 (Tania del Rio) Sabrina decides to take the high road by inviting the new girl, Gwen, to her slumber party, but Llandra isn't sure Gwen can be trusted with all of their magic secrets. $2.19

Sonic the Hedgehog 142 (various) Not only does the tyranny of Dr Robotnik go back as far as anyone on Mobius can remember, but there have always been heroes to fight that evil. This is the story of those heroes. $2.19

Veronica 156 (Dan Parent) Veronica's new boyfriend is more guarded than most – literally – because his father has just won the election, and now every date they go on is chaperoned by Secret Service men! $2.19

Avatar Press

Brian Pulido's Belladonna 2 (of 5; Brian Pulido & Clint Hilinski) Colleen MacGrath's wedding to Donovan was to unite two powerful Irish families in bliss. Instead, all of their hopes and dreams were laid to waste by marauding Vikings. Variant cover. $3.99

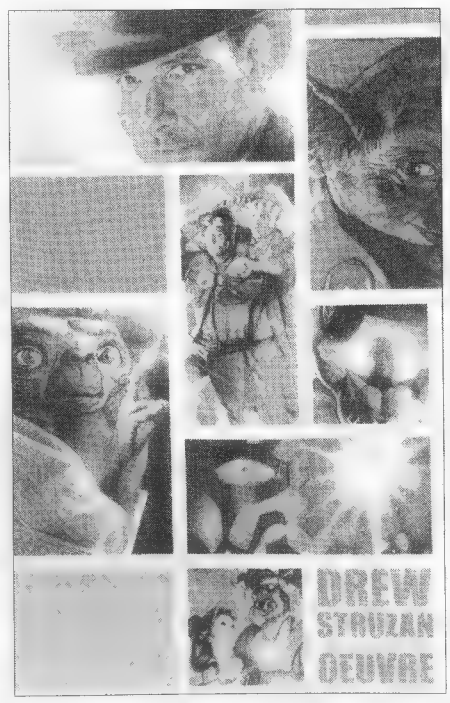
one-shot **Brian Pulido's War Angel: Book of Death** (Brian Pulido & Walter Geovani) Technology has failed mankind, and there is a return to the medieval times – but with a twist. Variant cover. 16pg b&w $2.99

new **Garth Ennis's 303** #1 (of 6; Garth Ennis & Jacen Burrows) Deep in the mountains of Afghanistan, a dozen Russian Special Forces soldiers race their British opponents for a secret neither of them can imagine. Variant cover. Mature readers. $3.99

Joe R Lansdale's By Bizarre Hands 6 (of 6; Joe R Lansdale & Dheeraj Verma) Lansdale adapts some of his favourite short stories into comic form for the first time. Mature readers. b&w $3.50

new **Stargate SG-1: Aris Boch** 1 (James Anthony & Jorge Correa) The SG-1 team stumbles upon the aftermath of a firefight between rival System Lords and bounty hunter Aris Boch. Variant covers. 16pg $2.99

Stargate SG-1: Fall of Rome 3 (of 3; James Anthony & Jorge Correa) Captain Carter and Colonel O'Neill are imprisoned and being prepared for their fate. Variant cover. $3.99



close-up

Drew Struzan: Oeuvre

DreamWave Productions

Writer: Jessie Horsting + Amy Horsting

Artist: Drew Sturzan

Drew Struzan is the best-kept secret in Hollywood. Over the last 30 years, his art has touched filmgoers, with images for Star Wars, Indiana Jones, Harry Potter, and hundreds more. Finally, Drew's posters, book and album covers, paintings from his private collection, and more have been brought together for the first time! 300pg $59.95

ON SALE OCTOBER

Bongo Comics

Bart Simpson 20 (Bates + Escobar & Shaw) Bart becomes film auteur as he and Milhouse set out to make the ultimate, independent, zombie movie. $2.99

Simpsons Comics 99 (Dixon & Costanza) Witness the exploits of Marge Simpson, the maven of motherhood, the queen of clean, when she starts a catering business. $2.99

Simpsons Classics 2 (Groening; tpbk) Lisa sets out to find the fiend behind the theft of the school's mascot. Collects Simpsons Comics #3-4. 64pg . $3.99

Claypool

Deadbeats 68 (Richard Howell & Ricardo Villagran) Attempting to bring normality to Fear City is a struggle, but Dakota Kane and Buddy Bradford shoulder the task when their new travellers' inn debuts. b&w $2.50

Elvira 138 (Strom + Sutton & Anderson) Elvira is drafted into planning the annual Monsters' Ball – but her selfless efforts are hampered by the zealot Captain Creature, enemy of all monsters. b&w $2.50

Drawn & Quarterly

new **Babel** 1 (David B) A boy's world is shattered by his brother's epileptic seizures and his own growing awareness of turmoil in the world at large. Mature readers. $9.95

one-shot **The Frank Ritza Papers** (David Collier; tpbk) Quirky collection of stories about family, living life in the army, and the search for information on a local artist. Mature. 192pg b&w $9.95

DreamWave

one-shot **Drew Struzan: Oeuvre** (Jessie Horsting + Amy Horsting & Drew Struzan) *See Close-Up, below.*

new **Mega Man** Vol 1 (Brian Augustyn & Mic Fong + Patrick Spaziante) When Dr Wily threatens to conquer the world with his legions of Automatons only the mighty superrobot Mega Man can put a stop to him! 112pg $10.95

new **Pat Lee's Transformers/ G.I. Joe: Divided Front** #1 (James McDonough + Adam Patyk & Pat Lee) The young Dashiell Faireborn – codename: FLINT – is forced to earn his stripes when the Joe team goes up against the newly resurrected menace of COBRA. $2.95

Transformers: Energon 28 (Simon Furman & Alex Milne) Who or what is destroying Energon-processing facilities across Cybertron? And why? .. $2.95

Transformers: Generation One 10 (James McDonough + Adam Patyk & Don Figueroa) After teaching Shockwave a lesson in humility, Starscream is next in line to pay the devil his due when the mighty Megatron returns to Earth to reclaim his rightful position as ruler of the Decpticons. $2.95

new **Transformers: Generation One More Than Meets the Eye Official Guidebook** Vol 1 (James McDonough + Adam Patyk & various; tpbk) Collecting the first four issues of the eight-part compendium, More Than Meets the Eye promises to give readers

the lowdown on all their favourite Robots in Disguise. 264pg $24.95

Transformers: The War Within Vol 3 The Age of Wrath 2 (Simon Furman & Joe Ng) Defeated, enslaved, ground beneath the conquering heel of the newly returned Megatron and put to work in the cauldron of Cybertron's inner core. Surely it can't get any worse for the Autobots. $2.95

Fantagraphics

one-shot **Hanging Out With the Dream King** (ed Joe McCabe) The most intimate look yet into the life and mind of the bestselling author and creator of The Sandman. 280pg $17.95

one-shot **The Pin-Up Art of Dan Decarlo** (ed Alex Chun) A collection of rare pin-ups from the late cartoonist who defined Betty and Veronica's look. Mature readers. 280pg b&w $18.95

one-shot **Zippy: From Here to Absurdity** (Bill Griffith; tpbk) Follow Zippy as he weaves in and out of Bushmiller Country and suddenly begins spouting Japanese, French, Russian, Farsi, Hungarian, Greek, Finnish, and Latin! 128pg $19.95

The Comics Journal 263 (various) This issue features an in-depth, career-spanning interview with writer and cartoonist Ed Brubaker, covering his life in comics from his early days as an indy cartoonist to his work for DC Comics on such titles as Batman and Sleeper. Mature readers. 192pg $9.95

Luba 9 (Gilbert Hernandez) It's the end of an era! Luba and Ofelia's absolute split! Sergio throws caution to the wind and wants Guadalupe to run away with him! Mature readers. 24pg b&w $3.50

Image

new **Battle of the Planets: Princess** 1 (of 6; David Wohl & Wilson Tortosa) Her name is Princess, and for her G-Force teammates, she's been the group's caretaker, warrior and sometimes leader. But now she'll need to play ALL of those roles as she embarks on her greatest and most dangerous mission-taking on a new and deadly force from Spectra – alone. 24pg b&w $2.99

Darkness 16 *(Streets Run Red* 3 of 3; Frank Tieri & Martin Montiel + Matt Banning + Matt Milla) Jackie will have to use the Darkness, brawn, and brains to win the day $2.99

one-shot **Firebreather: The Iron Saint** (Phil Hester & Andy Kuhn) When Duncan sets foot on British soil, ancient forces stir and an unstoppable armoured giant begins a rampage that can only end with Duncan's death. 48pg $5.95

Forsaken 3 (Carmen Treffiletti & Kristian Donaldson + Nick Zagami) As the Separatist goes public with his intent to inflame a full-scale race war, the team must race against the clock to track down their next lead before their greatest fear becomes a bloody reality. $2.95

Frankenstein Mobster 6 (Mark Wheatley) Tonight the Frankenstein Mobster will escape from the police, kidnap the Mayor and engage in wanton property damage. $2.95

one-shot **Houdini: The Man From Beyond** (Brian Haberlin & Jeff Philips + Gilbert Monsanto; graphic novel) *See Close-Up on following page.*

Humankind 3 (Tony Daniel & various) Detective Alia Sparrow, head of the planet's Human Crimes Unit, sympathetically hides Bruno away in the underground, where he meets and befriends a legendary samurai. $2.99

Invincible 18 (Robert Kirkman & Ryan Ottley) Invincible is enlisted to accompany the first manned space flight to Mars. What secrets could the red planet hold? $2.95

one-shot **The Legend of Sleepy Hollow** (Washington Irving & Bo Hampton; graphic novel) Faithful adaptation of Washington Irving's tale surrounding the ghostly inhabitants of Tarrytown, New York around the time of the American Revolution. With new covers and 16 pages of new material. 64pg $7.95

Noble Causes 4 (Jay Faerber & Fran Bueno) As friends and foes close in on Krennick, he uncovers a secret from his past that could dramatically affect his future. $2.95

Pscythe 2 (of 2; Mark Texeira) Angela stalks her first bounty. Little does she know, the hunter will become the hunted. 40pg b& w $3.95

PvP 12 (Scott Kurtz) Five office co-workers enjoying what seems to be your run-of-the-mill Halloween party. Outside, a spaceship of unknown origin hovers menacingly. b& w $2.95

Rising Stars 22 (of 24; *Phoenix in Ascension* 1 of 3; J. Michael Straczynski & Brent Anderson + John Starr) The superpowered Specials set out to change the world. Now that one of the Specials is elected President of the United States, the world will change – whether it wants to or not. $2.99

Rob Zombie's Spook Show International Omnibus #2 (Rob Zombie + Pat Boutin & Fabio Laguna + EJ Su) El Superbeasto keeps on riding the hot rails to hell where evil monkeys lurk. Collects issues #5-6. Mature readers. 48pg $4.95

Savage Dragon 119 (Erik Larsen) Things are not right in Washington as the President of the United States spends the few days leading up to the impending election readying the country for war: a war with the superpowered beings that police the very planet. $2.95

Savage Dragon: God War 3 (of 4; Robert Kirkman & Mark Englert) Dragon and what's left of the Gods must unite to stop an ancient evil that threatens to end all life on this planet. $2.95

Superpatriot: War on Terror 4 (of 4; Robert Kirkman & EJ Su) SuperPatriot vs Baron Blitzkrieg with the fate of the United States of America at stake! $2.95

Sylvia Faust 2 (of 4; Jason Henderson & Greg Scott) Bimonthly. Tim Klass already has a small army of young employees, and now he has to deal with his worst waitress ever, Sylvia Faust, who's depressed because she's found her father and he doesn't remember her. $2.95

new **Tales of Tellos** 1 (of 3; various) The swashbuckling tale of Serra and Sheva Nova, featuring the return of the beautiful yet deadly Dyn Jessa! $3.50

Tomb Raider 47 *(Gathering Storm* 2 of 3; James Bonny & Eric Basaldua + Jay Leisten) As Lara Croft searches for the ancient artifact known as the Rapture, she is confronted by a powerful adversary sent by the Vatican. Variant cover. $2.99

Ultra #3 (of 8) Jonathan Luna & Joshua Luna) When Pearl finally decides to acknowledge the signs leading to true love (which may or may not happen), she makes a huge leap of faith by taking on something far more dangerous than crime-fighting or cut-throat superhero politics combined: the dating scene. $2.95

The Walking Dead 13 (Robert Kirkman & Charlie Adlard) The epic tale of survival continues as Rick and crew find another possible shelter. Mature readers. b& w $2.95

The Walking Dead Vol 2: Miles Behind Us (Robert Kirkman & Charlie Adlard; tpbk) This volume follows the band of survivors on their tragic journey in search of shelter. Characters live and die as they brave a treacherous landscape littered with packs of the walking dead. Collects issues #7-12. Mature readers. 136pg b& w $12.95

one-shot **The Wicked West** (Todd Livingston & Robert Tinnell + Neil Vokes; graphic novel) The year is 1870, the place is the Texas frontier town of Javer's Tanks. Cotton Coleridge is a man running from his past. And being new in town, he's the one the locals blame when people start dying. 96pg $9.95

Witchblade 80 (Ron Marz & Michael Choi + Brian Buccellato) Someone wants New York City Police detective Sara Pezzini dead, and not even the powerful supernatural artefact called the Witchblade will be enough to keep her from harm. $2.99

one-shot **Wonderland** (Derek Watson & Kit Wallis; graphic novel) In a future torn apart by conventional, chemical and biological warfare, three teenagers struggle to retain their humanity and survive against seemingly overwhelming odds. 64pg $6.95

Moonstone

Cyclone Bill and the Tall Tales 2 (Dan Dougherty) As Bill's murder trial begins, the surviving Tall Tales watch the televised spectacle from Graceland. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

one-shot **Moonstone Monsters** Vol 1 (various; tpbk) Collects the first five issues of Moonstone's hit horror anthology, featuring Werewolves, Mummies, Vampire Vixens, Ghosts, and Sea Creatures. 170pg b&w $16.95

one-shot **Mr Keen, Tracer of Lost Persons** (Justin Gray & Lee Ferguson; tpbk) Ninette Moeller steps off a flight from Paris and onto the mean streets of New York City. She's after one Lucien Denali, a man who has done unspeakable damage to her. Collects the three issue miniseries. Mature. 96pg b&w $10.95

Oni Press

Blue Monday: Painted Moon 4 (of 4; Chynna Clugston-Major) Bleu's tantalising conquest for Mr Bishop's heart nears its climax, but not before one final attempt by Alan to get to Bleu first! Mature readers. b&w $2.99

one-shot **The Long Haul** (Antony Johnston & Eduardo Barretto) It's 1871, and Cody Plummer's prison time is behind him, and he's having a hard time staying legit. Mature readers. 152pg b&w ... $14.95

one-shot **Love as a Foreign Language** Vol 1 (J. Torres & Eric Kim) Joel's life is about to go from dark dreams to cotton candy kisses and it's all because of Hana. The very sight of this girl sends him flying straight to cloud nine, but won't another year in Korea send him crashing back down? Mature readers. 72pg b&w $5.95

Ojo 3 (of 5; Sam Kieth & Chris Wisnia) As Ojo's appetite grows, so does Annie's anxiety over the connection between her new pet and the giant beast living in the drain pipe. Mature readers. b&w $2.99

Queen & Country 28 (Greg Rucka & Mike Norton) Chris Lankford, the newest addition to Special Operations' team of

Illuminations

Highlights from October's releases

Selected by Martin "Biff" Averre

YOU don't need a new number one or a re-launch to get high sales, just good stories. Over the last year, DC has proved this on numerous occasions and in October all of DC's best titles will be ongoing ones. **Superman** #210 is halfway through the Jim Lee storyline and this issue is the best so far as Wonder Woman confronts Superman in a battle to stop the chaos that has ensued from Superman's well-intentioned actions over the last few months. I love 'Who is the fastest? Who is the strongest?' confrontations and this is going to be a great one.

Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5

I'm one of the many who could not believe it when Green Lantern, Hal Jordan, fell from grace and became the mass murderer who destroyed the Green Lantern Corps. I still can't believe it happened. But relief to my suffering is now at hand as the six issue DC title **Green Lantern Rebirth** sees the return of Hal Jordan as a Green Lantern. This is a mini -series which really will be pivotal and should not be missed by any true Green Lantern or DC Universe fan. As Geoff Johns is scripting there will be a spellbinding story gracefully illustrated by E.Van Sciver guaranteeing a truly wonderful comic.

Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5

The recent **Avengers/JLA** mini was extremely well received saleswise and proved to be as good as any tale could be that includes absolutely all the JLA and Avengers characters. Now in the pages of **JLA** we will see an 8 issue epilogue to this series that may well prove even better than the mini was. Scribe Kurt Busiek takes the story on as the Space Egg left behind as Krona's prison is the center of research to ensure that Krona never again appears. The real threat though will come from a parallel Earth introduced in the **JLA/ Avengers** mini. Thank heaven for the return of sanity and multiple earths. This way we can have *Elseworlds*-style stories that actually fit the continuity of Earth prime, i.e. the DC Universe. To summarise, **JLA** #107-114 gets:

Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5

Did you ever wonder what happened to **Rising Stars**, which mysteriously vanished from the schedules after #21, just 3 issues from the stunning conclusion? So did I. We can only assume that the contractual/money problem has been resolved as **Rising Stars** #22 finally appears in October from Top Cow. We can now look forward to finding out the final fate of the 'Specials'. This series sold consistently well over the previous 21 issues and will outstrip anything else Image puts out this month.

Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5

October is Wolverine month at Marvel as Logan celebrates his 30th anniversary with multiple guest appearances and a prose hardcover. The start of a 6- issue Mark Millar and John Romita Jr run on the core series, **Wolverine**, with #20 is the highlight for me as a retailer and a reader. I expect sales to rise by at least 15% on this already strong seller.

Sales 5/5 Quality 5/5

The cream of all the titles this month has to be the Marvel four- issue mini **Stoker's Dracula**. This story has astonishingly lain in the Marvel crypt for 30 years. Back in 1973 when both Dick Giordano and Roy Thomas were at the peak of their careers they collaborated on a telling of the original Bram Stoker novel intended to be printed in black and white. The first 100 pages appeared in the black and white **Dracula Lives** magazine #5-11 and **Legion Of Monsters** #1, then – as both titles folded – the final 92 pages were never printed. This work has been described as Giordano's unfinished symphony so news that it will finally see print in its entirety and in the intended black and white is fabulous. Lovers of horror and of truly great art have to place this on their must buy list. **Sales 5/5 Quality10/5** (out of this world)

*With 22 years of comic retail experience as Ace Comics, Biff has also produced his **Illuminations** monthly fanzine for 19 years before moving it to the web.*

Minders, is in a bit of a bind. He pretty much blew his first assignment and now if the gunmen on his tail don't kill him, Tara Chace just might! Mature. b&w . $2.99

Sirius

one-shot **Deady the Terrible Teddy** (Voltaire & various; graphic novel) Deady, the Terrible Teddy, returns in an all new second volume, and this time, he's brought a whole new batch of fiends (sic). Mature readers. 48pg b&w$5.95

Poison Elves 81 (Drew Hayes) Lusiphur's Eleven are on the road! Our errant heroes head south to Fell Keep, citadel of evil. Aside from internal bickering and power clashes, everything goes well until a freak snowstorm blows in. Mature readers. 24pg b&w . $2.95

Poison Elves: Hyena 2 (of 4; Keith Davidsen & Scott Lewis) Barely surviving a demonic army's assault, Hyena and Quinn track their wretched enemies to their lair, determined to exact revenge on their elusive master. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

Tokyopop

.hack Vol 3 (of 3; Tatsuya Hamazaki) As the controversy surrounding Shugo's bracelet shifts into overdrive, will our heroes be deleted, or is it end of the world as we know it? 280pg b&w$9.99

Abenobashi: Magical Shopping Arcade Vol 2 (of 2; Gainax Satoru Akahori & Ryusei Deguchi) Sasshi's imaginations runs amock, taking Arumi and him on a roller coaster ride through the bizarre world of forgotten manga characters. 192pg b&w $9.99

Cardcaptor Sakura Vol 3 (of 6; CLAMP) When missing Clow Cards begin turning up alarmingly close to Sakura's home, catching the cards isn't just a matter of responsibility – it's a matter of protecting the ones she loves! 192pg b&w $9.99

new **Cross** Vol 1 (of 5; Sumiko Amakawa) All hell breaks loose when our priest hero exorcises demons, pushing him to the brink of insanity. 192pg b&w $9.99

Faeries' Landing Vol 6 (of 13; Yu Hyun) Yuri joins hands with Bast – the Egyptian cat goddess – to fulfil each other's needs. 192pg b&w $9.99

GTO Vol 21 (of 25; Tohru Fujisawa) After dispatching a bunch of delinquents, Tokiwa brings the rumble to Kikuchi. 192pg b&w $9.99

new **The Greatest Stars of the NBA 2004** Vol 1: Shaquille O'Neal Cine-Manga (1 of 4; various) Shaquille 'Diesel' O'Neal takes no prisoners with his thunderous dunks, sweet jump hooks and shot blocking skills. 96pg $7.99

The Greatest Stars of the NBA 2004 Vol 2: Tim Duncan Cine-Manga (2 of 4; various) With a resume that includes two championships and two MVPs, Tim Duncan makes it clear that he's a force and a phenomenon with a bank shot that has no answer. 96pg $7.99

Gundam Seed Astray Vol 3 (of 3; various) When Lowe and company help out on the Giga-Float, Gold Frame takes the opportunity to make another destructive appearance. 192pg b&w $9.99

new **Boys Be...** Vol 1 (of 20; Masahiro Itabashi & Hiroyuki Tamakoshi) A benched jock finds his game in the nightclubs of Shinjuku. 216pg b&w $9.99

new **Hyper Rune** Vol 1 (of 4; Tamayo Akiyama) Rune Ayanokouji lives a life less ordinary with a mad scientist for a grandfather and mysterious humanoid robots popping up around town. 192pg b&w $9.99

Kill Me, Kiss Me Vol 4 (of 5; Lee Young You) Ghoon-Hahm learns that there's more to Jung-Woo than he originally thought. 192pg b&w .. $9.99

Lupin III: World's Most Wanted Vol 2 (of 13; Monkey Punch) Always hot on the prowl for his next big score, our International Man of Manga Mystery gets more than he bargained when he crosses the flesh-hold of a high-priced brothel. 192pg b&w $9.99

Malcolm in the Middle Vol 2 (of 3; various) Mom is eight months pregnant and Dad's held in custody by mall security; guess who is going to help mom deliver the baby? 96pg $9.99

Model Vol 4 (Lee So-Young) In explosive revelations, friendships are pushed to the limit and lovers become bound until death do they part. 192pg b&w $9.99

Peach Girl: Change of Heart Vol 10 (Miwa Ueda) The love triangle has been shattered as Momo breaks it off with Kiley for good. 192pg b&w $9.99

Pet Shop of Horrors Vol 9 (of 10; Matsuri Akino) A young girl is haunted by dreams from past eras, each one involving the count. 192pg b&w $9.99

Planetes Vol 4 (of 5; Makoto Yukimura) As fee deals with her son's penchant for saving every stray animal that struts by, an attack on the U.S. in orbital space triggers a series of events that will bring the world to the brink of another war. 192pg b&w $9.99

one-shot **Power Rangers: Dinothunder** (various) When Conner, Kira and Ethan discover special Dino Gems outside their high school, they are suddenly granted special powers. 96pg .. $7.99

The Princess Diaries 2 (various) No sooner has Princess Mia moved into the royal palace with her wise grandmother Queen Clarisse than she learns her days as a princess are numbered. 96pg$7.99

Psychic Academy Vol 5 (of 11; Katsu Aki) Before they can have some hot fun in the summertime, Ai, Orina and Mew help Zero investigate a mysterious stray aura at seaside camp. 192pg b&w $9.99

new **The Queen's Knight** Vol 1 (of 14; Kim Kang Won) During summer vacation to visit her mother in Germany, 15-year-old Yuna Lee falls off a cliff and is rescued by Reino, an 18-year-old knight living in the magical land of Phantasma. 92pg b&w $9.99

Saiyuki Vol 5 (of 9; Kazuya Minekura) The story of how Sanzo, Goku, Gojyo, and Hakkai met is revealed at last – violence drew them close, but something far more powerful kept them together. 208pg b&w $9.99

Sgt Frog Vol 5 (of 8; Mine Yoshizaki) What sinister plans do these amphibian fibbers have hiding under their lily pads? 192pg b&w $9.99

Shrek 2 Cine-Manga (various) Newlyweds Shrek and Fiona go to visit her parents, the King and Queen of the Kingdom of Far Far Away. 96pg $7.99

Snow Drop Vol 6 (of 12; Choi Kyung-Ah) On their trip together, the scheming Hwi-Rim and Sun-Mi attempt to split up So-Na and Hae-Gi. 192pg b&w $9.99

Suikoden III Vol 4 (of 7; Aki Shimizu) Deep in the forest, Chris and Nash venture to the village of the Alma Kinan clan. 192pg b&w $9.99

one-shot **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Vol 1: It's a Shell of a Town** (various) The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles get a surprise visit from mysterious robots that destroy the turtles' lair and separate them from master Splinter. 96pg $9.99

Threads of Time Vol 2 (of 11; Mi Young Noh) The Mongol princess Ah-Than-Ha-Das, determined to prove that a sword alone doesn't make the warrior, disguises as a man in order to enter a competition. 192pg b&w $9.99

Tokyo Babylon Vol 4 (of 7; CLAMP) Subaru Sumeragi gives peace to the dead, but what can he do for the living? 184pg b&w $9.99

Tokyo Tribes Vol 2 (of 11; Santa Inoue) The battle hits the streets as Mera of the Bukuro Wu-Ronz tribe and Kai of the Musashinokuni Saru tribe engage in a no-holds-barred battle royale. 192pg b&w $9.99

Vampire Game Vol 9 (of 14; Judal) Panged by guilt, Leene is unable to go through with her murderous plans. Filled with mixed feelings, she still cannot cast aside her desire to kill... or her growing affection for Ishtar! 192pg b&w . $9.99

Warriors of Tao Vol 2 (of 4; Shinya Kuwahara) Karma deploys two Earth gladiators – the dangerously gorgeous and seductive Locutus and by-the-book hitman Leon – to assassinate Toma. 192pg b&w $9.99

Wild Act Vol 9 (of 10; Rie Takada) The battle of the two Ryus wages on! When a not-so-friendly wager for Yuniko's affection is made, the stakes become high as the stage turns into a battleground. 192pg b&w $9.99

INTERNATIONAL

Black Library

Warhammer Monthly 85 (various) This month sees the White Scars space marines take on the cruel Dark Eldar in *The Pilgrim*. b&w $3.50

UK NEWSSTAND

DC Thomson

The Beano 3224-3227 (weekly; various) Classic kids humour anthology featuring Dennis the Menace, the Bash Street Kids, and all your favourites. £0.55

Beano Superstars 152 (various) One complete strip of the long-running humour anthology. 36pg £0.65

Classics from the Comics 98 (various) Anthology reprinting classic cartoon strips from DC Thomson's vintage kids' comics Beano and Dandy. 68pg b&w £1.20

Commando Action and Adventure Stories 3710-3717 (eight per month; digest; various) Featuring one self-contained comic strip per issue. Some new material. 68pg b&w £1.00

Fun-Size Beano 161-161 (fortnightly; various) Pocket-sized spin-off from the Beano featuring Dennis the Menace, and all the usual suspects. 68pg £0.60

Panini Comics

Action Man 114 (four-weekly; various) The adventures of the toughest action hero around, as he combats Doctor X's fiendish attempts to take over the world! Exciting quizzes, competitions and a free gift every issue. 36pg £1.75

Astonishing Spider-Man 117 (four-weekly; various) Reprints the current US series by Straczynski and Romita, plus other key issues and classic stories by Lee and Ditko. 76pg £2.40

Avengers United 45 (four-weekly; various) Continuing *The Kang War* epic, backed by a reprint from the Avengers archives. 76pg £2.40

Batman: Legends 12-13 (four-weekly; various) The Dark Knight's latest UK outing, showcasing present day adventures and 'digitally remastered' Neal Adams stories. 76pg £2.40

Cartoon Network 79 (four-weekly; various) Your fave Cartoon Network characters, including Dexter's Laboratory, Johnny Bravo, Powerpuff Girls and loads more! Plus: free gifts, competitions and all the latest toon info. 52pg £1.75

Doctor Who Magazine 348 (four-weekly; Gray & various) Marvel UK's longest running title and original comic strip. Includes articles, interviews and news on the forthcoming BBC series. 52pg£3.40

Essential X-Men 117 (four-weekly; Claremont + Morrison & various) Reprints the adventures of the New X-Men and Team X-Treme, with occasional X-related crossovers. 76pg £2.40

Mighty World of Marvel 21 (four-weekly; various) Classic anthology, featuring Miller and Janson's Daredevil, Thomas and Trimpe's Hulk, plus Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD by Steranko. 76pg £2.40

Powerpuff Girls Powerzine 30 (four-weekly; various) Comic strips and a variety of fun, entertaining and humorous features presented by the 3 super-heroines, Blossom, Bubbles and Buttercup. 36pg £1.75

Scooby Doo 17 (four-weekly; various) Regular vanquishing of baddies who "would have done it if it weren't for those pesky kids" guaranteed. Also contains competitions, activities, quizzes and more! 36pg £1.99

Spectacular Spider-Man 105-106 (three-weekly; various) Title for younger readers, with games, posters and an original UK strip featuring classic Spidey villains. 36pg .. £1.50

Tom & Jerry 80 (four-weekly; various) Comic strip stories featuring probably the world's most well known cartoon duo, plus free gifts, puzzles, games, drawing and posters. 36pg £1.99

Ultimate Spider-Man 33-34 (four-weekly; Bendis & Hairsine + Miki) A double helping of *Ultimate Six*, featuring The Ultimates and a clutch of Spidey's deadliest foes. 52pg £1.95

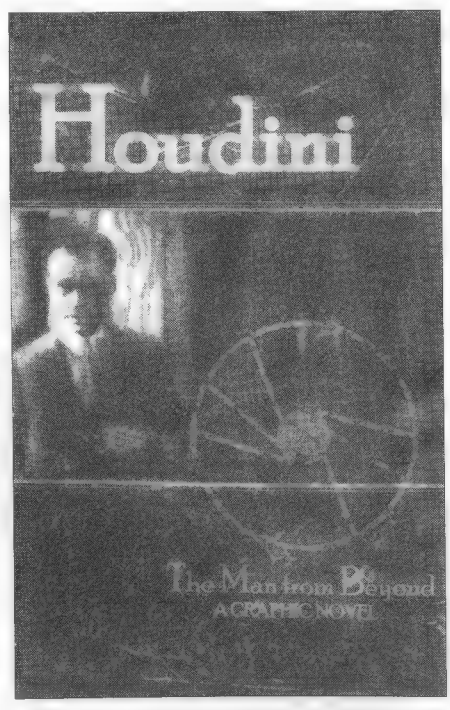
Ultimate X-Men 20 (four-weekly; Millar & Finch) The X-Universe re-imagined – everything you thought you knew about the X-Men is wrong! 52pg £1.95

Wolverine & Deadpool 104 (four-weekly; various) Current and classic solo Wolverine tales, now with added insanity from the Merc With the Mouth. £1.95

Rebellion

2000AD #1410-1413 (various) Strontium Dog Johnny Alpha is fighting for his life in *Traitor to His Kind*, by John Wagner and Carlos Ezquerra, while Robo-Hunter Samantha Slade is captured by an insane collector in *The Furzt Case*, by Alan Grant and Ian Gibson. $3.75

Judge Dredd Megazine 224 (various) Young Middenface and his fellow mutants face the terror of *Killoden*, while The Simping Detective meets a rival dick in *Innocence*. 100pg . $10.99



close-up

Houdini: The Man From Beyond

Image Comics

Writer: Brian Haberlin

Artists: Jeff Philips + Gilbert Monsanto

On the eve of the Wall Street collapse of 1929, Harry Houdini makes the ultimate escape: he returns from the dead in the guise of a young stockbroker and partners with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to prevent his wife Bess from being murdered. The search calls into question Houdini's own demise and brings them into contact with a few luminaries 160pg $16.95

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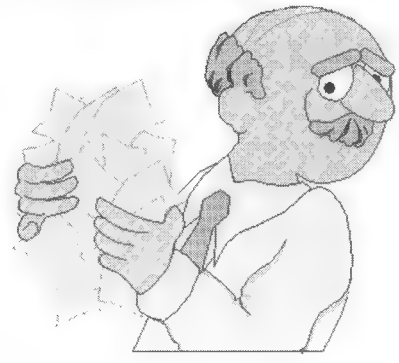

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X-Men, the Uncanny (1st series) #1-350
Green Lantern (1st series) #1-200
Incredible Hulk #110-400
Fantastic Four (1st series) #1-400
Journey into Mystery #83-125
Batman #150-300
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Detective Comics #300–500
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Wonder Woman – ANY AND ALL

We are also looking for runs of – Spawn\|Authority\|Cable\|Catwoman\|Thunderbolts and many others. Please contact us on 020 7836 5630 if you have any of the titles listed.

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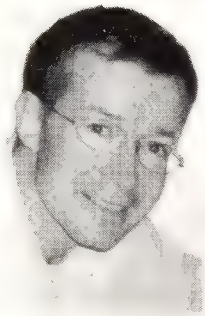


Getting your break into British comics

Novel Graphics by Paul Gravett

Highlighting the latest and best in graphic novels

FOR SOME people the dream of making your dazzling debut in comics, of getting your first work into print that launches your stellar career, can take forever. For some it never happens.

Others have to wait years before they finally see their ambitious graphic novel project professionally published. Persistence, networking and sheer luck often count every bit as much, it seems, as genuine ability.

Then there are the exceptions, like 17-year old David Trumble. He has both the drive and the added good fortune to go to Cherwell School in Oxford. Here every year since 1992, a Dan Hemingway Prize has been awarded to one pupil to recognise and reward creative potential in any artistic field. It keeps alive the memory of a gifted former student who was killed aged only 19 by a motorist on Christmas Eve 1991.

The prize is run by his parents Sue and John. David Trumble won the 2003 prize and his chosen field was a graphic novel. What he had started as a summer holiday project of 70 pages ended up expanding into over 200 hand-drawn pages, which took him over a year to complete, even working on the book while in class.

Fortunately his teachers grudgingly refrained from confiscating it during lessons.

*Above: 17 year-old David Trumbell's award-winning graphic novel, **Climate**.*

This summer his whole story, **Climate**, has been published as a meaty 264-page paperback for only £12.50 through John Hemingway's business The Blake Project (*www.climatethenovel.com*).

Climate is subtitled "a cinematic novel in three parts" and the movies are as much a passion as comics for David.

It is partly his homage to the shadowy world of film noir, imagined in stark black-and-white contrast, where one lapse of morality can spiral into tragedy. It is also his response to Frank Capra's classic *It's A Wonderful Life*, opening with a variation on the pivotal scene where a depressed Jimmy Stewart attempts suicide, only to be prevented by his trainee guardian angel and granted a second chance at living.

Trumble's lead is timid insurance clerk Robert Pui, about to throw himself off the roof of his office building, when he is stopped by an investigator. He reveals that both he and Pui are on the hitlist of the notorious Mitrovic brothers. "Ain't living much more fun when you know someone wants you dead?" Pui learns that the fact that these Croatian crooks are deceased won't stop them, because in the world of **Climate** all spirits caught in limbo can manifest themselves as ghostly "interims", returning from the grave.

Moments later, a sudden thunderstorm from nowhere announces the killer Sauer Mitrovic, revived as a spectral giant made of rain and hate. Barely escaping, Pui has no choice but to become ensnared in the private agendas of the detective squad, as they track down the killers by chasing the weather. In the best crime fiction traditions, two seemingly unrelated cases begin "bleeding into each other" as Pui's connections to the Mitrovic killings and to another brutal slaying of a young woman gradually emerge and merge.

Considering his youth, this is a hugely ambitious and promising premiere, even if some of his cast look too much alike at times. Trumble shows precocious skill, blending exposition with characterful repartee, surprising the reader with further deaths and resurrections and propelling the tale to its stormy finale and an affirmation of life.

At this early stage, his art shows some of the look of French noir genius Jacques Tardi (his Nestor Burma adaptation **The Bloody Streets of Paris** was recently translated by iBooks), although when I met David at Oxford's comics festival Caption last month, he told me he was unaware of him.

David and twin brother Stephen have begun studying to become film-makers, but he assured me that he remains committed to comics with their creative control and unlimited budget. In fact, he is already hard at work on his second epic about a kamikaze pilot in the Battle of Okinawa.

The more new opportunities like this for upcoming British talents to hone their skills here, the merrier, and Imagineire's two series of £5.99 graphic novels offer just that...

On the frontline

You won't find these titles in comic shops, but they have had prominent promotions in W H Smiths and one of them has her own live-action Saturday morning BBC TV tie-in. For girls there's **Mysti**, half-human, half-fairy, whose spells cause complications when she's assigned to look after a troublesome earth-girl. A cosmetics range and a second TV series are in the pipeline. (*www.mysti.co.uk*).

For boys, **The 4 Aces** follows young soccer genius Zack Cassidy from his schoolboy dreams to professional football when he joins Highgate Comets (*www.the4aces.com*).

The series is hooked into schools via sponsors Umbro and the ESFA Cup and casting is underway soon for a TV version as well.

I'm not a fan of fairies or football, but their freshness is infectious and I welcome this clever attempt to take UK comics out of their cultish niche and make them an integral part of a mass market brand. The writing can be quite sharp and although it's a team effort, the art shows flair, notably newcomer James McKay's designs for **Mysti 3: TLC**.

Typically, teenage boys don't read and teenage girls are even trickier to appeal to, but these colourful hybrid "graphic books" might be a taste of British comics' future, drawing readers into their fully realised worlds by enabling them to interact with the characters originated online, on TV and in print.

PG tips

There are so many great graphic novels around these days, I'm spoilt for choice. Here are a few I'm ordering and websites to find out more:

EVERYMAN
(The Brothers Goldman and Joe Bucco: Fwd Books)
October 2004 ..... $7.00
Be The People, first volume of this wish-fulfilment political thriller, speculates that a new US grassroots movement, OneLove, exposes corruption via tampered voting machines (sound familiar?) and so wins the 2004 election, storming into the White House. Gripping *West Wing* intrigue in a 120-page manga package. *www.onelove.us*

MY FAITH IN FRANKIE
(Mike Carey, Sonny Liew and Marc Hempel: DC/Vertigo and Titan)
13 October 2004 ..... $6.95
Multi-levelled romantic fable about how growing up can mean growing apart and how teenage girl Frankie finds herself caught between her cocky dead boyfriend and her jealous personal deity. Malaysian-born Liew's supple styles and inventive flashbacks are a revelation.
www.vertigocomics.com

TINTIN AND THE ALPH'ART
(Hergé; Egmont)
October 2004 ..... £9.99
The sketches, scenario and extra post-humous notes of Hergé's unfinished 24th album are finally translated into a regular 64-page Tintin hardback. His witty satire of the art world is also a tantalising glimpse into his creative process.
www.tintin.com

FROM EROICA WITH LOVE
(Aoike Yasuko; DC/CMX)
13 October 2004 ..... $9.95
Goodness knows what people will make of this glorious 1970s mix of high action and high camp starring a gay long-haired Robert Plant lookalike cast as British aristocrat Dorian Red Gloria, but who is secretly Eroica, Europe's most wanted art thief. A real hoot to kick off DC's new manga imprint, CMX.
www.cmxmanga.com

BARAKA AND BLACK MAGIC IN MOROCCO
(Rick Smith; Alternative Comics)
October 2004 ..... $14.95
An American abroad, Smith records the sights and senses of this "outside world", from Tangiers to Casablanca.
www.alternativecomics.com

Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

The mild-mannered creator/writer of the Internet's original comics industry rumour and news column has outraged many a publisher and survived more than one change of website. But, despite several attempts to stop it, the Squiddy Award-winning gutterpress site continues to thrive, with over 20,000 hits a week at its home of www.comicbookresources.com

From his unique vantage point, Rich often scoops the industry newshounds with his stories. Here are the highlights from this month's Gutter...

Star Treatment

I understand the **Red Star** creative is taking a hiatus in the wake of the comics market continuing to collapse (unless you're a top 20 book or manga). Right now, the book may continue in an annual trade format, but not in the single issues we've seen recently. Shame.

Wayne Manner

Of late, I've become increasingly aware of a DC/Marvel rivalry that goes well beyond the barbs of competitors, into the personal level. Now, comic readers became used to Bill Jemas and Joe Quesada's slings and arrows against DC as part of the Bill And Joe's Excellent Adventure Out Of Bankruptcy for Marvel, and convention-goers were very used to Bob Wayne's return volleys using his own distinctive brand of cutting sarcasm (hey, I thought only we Brits were allowed to do that).

But that didn't stop projects like **JLA/Avengers** – indeed Bob Wayne used that very project to highlight differences between Marvel and DC's publishing policies. But was that attitude to a project already signed off on indication of something more than the usual banter?

There is certainly bad blood between individuals at both companies.When Bill Jemas was made President of Marvel, I understand Paul Levitz appealed to Jemas's bosses to get him fired, only to be rebuffed. Bill and Joe made clear attacks against Paul Levitz using comicbook websites and message boards to spread the animosity.

Paul Levitz refused a number of DC-exclusive creators to do any work, no matter how small, on Marvel's 9-11 charity projects. I have also been made aware of high-placed recruitment assaults on DC's top people from Marvel of late – ones that DC had to use every clause in their employment contracts to repel.

But Bob Wayne made it clear that the **New York Observer** article seems to be a sticking point between the companies. Joe's comment in the article that stuck out was: *'What the fuck is DC, anyway?' Mr. Quesada said, stoking the fires. 'They'd be better off calling it AOL Comics. At least people know what AOL is. I mean, they have Batman and Superman and they don't know what to do with them. That's like being a porn star with the biggest dick and you can't get it up.'* And, indeed it was the limp dick comment that seemed to get Paul's goat more than anything.

I understand Bob Wayne has been seen as the man who's kept this particular feud going, and is definitely the target of Marvel's ire. I have never heard Bob Wayne talked about so harshly and openly by Marvel's staff as he was in San Diego and he's regarded as Paul Levitz's rottweiler.

The Brian Bendis Panel [at WizardWorld Chicago] took this to new heights, by pulling much of this out into the open. And it gave Bob Wayne the opportunity to swing by and open up the specifics of the story.

An interesting panel it was, too. And some have been summarising it as Bob Wayne, an officer of DC coming to a creator's panel as a representative of DC, to ask for the firing of Joe Quesada, an officer of his main competitor. Despite what that means legally, and what position Warner Bros may take on that, it's

continued on next page...

Networks

Comics news and gossip on the Internet

Compiled by Chris Rice and his team of Netmites

Net sightings

Grayskull Days

Masters of the Universe *is a title that's had a convoluted publishing history. Initially published by small indie MVCreations through Image, it shifted over to CrossGen and then went independent shortly before CrossGen started collapsing.*

However, rumours have started recently implying that another company was about to take over the license.

Val Staples of MVC recently contacted our very own internet gossip-hound Rich Johnston to try and answer those rumours and give some clue as to the future of ***MotU*** *with MVC:*

We've been saying for over a year that at some point, we would probably stop publishing licensed books and focus more on freelancing. When exactly? Who knows... In reference to **Masters of the Universe**, if there came a point where we ceased to publish the title I would have no clue why another publisher would want to jump on board the license...

I'm a bigger **MOTU** fan than almost anyone alive. I know this brand inside and out, better than Mattel actually. Despite that passion, we've had to fight tooth and nail to produce a product fans might enjoy given the restrictions in place.

We're at the licensor's mercy and that's just how it goes. All deals sound fantastic at first until things get underway. Why another publisher would want to fight to publish a book that under performs in comparison to most Marvel, Dark Horse and DC comics and trades – is limited to a finite list of characters (names, origins, designs, etc) from the new cartoon only – does not allow for the creation of any new characters, vehicles, locations, etc – and is plot-directed by a specific Mattel department, preventing freedom for a publisher to tailor a story to our older comic audience is beyond me.

That would be like watching a masochist cut himself repeatedly and think "Wow, that looks like fun! I want to try too!" Would it be possible that an interested publisher is also masochistic? They'd have to be.

Above: ***Masters of the Universe****'s licensor puts the squeeze on MVCreations.*

Thus proving that the recent toy nostalgia boom has a fairly large sting in its tail, now that falling sales are highlighting the problems inherent in licensed properties.

With ***Transformers*** *publisher Dreamwave also rumoured to be about to drop the license, and sales falling across the genre, it seems that the bust is fully upon us.*

Caliban meets The Hulk

As predicted by Networks *some months ago, Peter David is returning to* ***Hulk****, although he's made a slightly roundabout way to becoming the main series writer, and at the moment it's only for a six issue run.*

He spoke to Newsarama *after the official announcement at the recent Wizard World Chicago convention, revealing that he was initially approached to write an* ***Ultimate Hulk*** *series:*

They spoke to me about it and I was intrigued by the idea... and also a bit daunted considering the character, y'know, eats people... I wrote a script and then Marvel decided against doing an **Ultimate Hulk** title. Not sure why. Maybe timing problems with **Ultimates**, maybe the market, or maybe because the character, y'know, eats people.

But so many people – most particularly Joe [Quesada] – were so jazzed about the overall plot and the first script I'd turned in that it was decided, what the heck, let's do it as a limited series set in the Marvel Universe. Which I was more than happy to do since it meant I didn't have to deal with the whole eating people thing. So ultimately – no pun intended – it was Quesada who got me back for this go-around, when I re-did the script to set it in the Marvel Universe, it was wholly apart from the ongoing series...

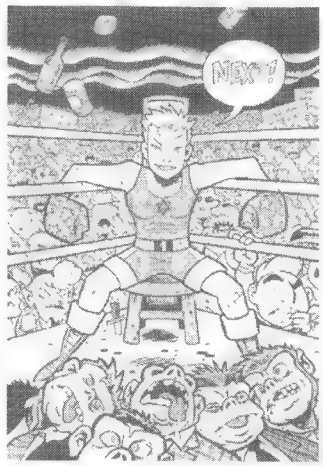
Now it turns out that apparently there is no ongoing series aside from us. Which is a weird place to be in, because I was used to us just being this sort of side novelty and suddenly we're the only game in town...

We're going for something timeless. Something with depth.

Something we can rip off but it's okay because the guy we're ripping off ripped off other people.

Yes, that's right, we're sourcing Shakespeare. Entitled **Tempest Fugit**, the Hulk is washed up on an island populated entirely by monsters, including several drawn from his own past. He fights to protect two helpless castaways there while trying to figure out who's behind it all. If riffing *The Tempest* was good enough for the *Forbidden Planet* movie, then it's good enough for Marvel.

David has also said that if sales are good enough, then he may stick around for the long run, which Networks *would say is a good thing...*



Knocking On Evan's Door

Networks *fave Evan Dorkin recently revealed a little of his upcoming plans on his blog:*

It looks like I'll actually have a new Slave Labor book out this December. It will feature a new short *Kid Blastoff* strip, some material from **Nickelodeon** magazine and *Billy vs Super Rad*, about a kid who hates his superhero brother and decides to become his number one enemy.

This title might end up being yet another ongoing one for me – meaning I do one whenever the hell – because it'll be sort of like **Dork** for action-adventure and humour material that's not R-rated.

Anyway, the current plan is for a December solicitation. The cover's mocked up and it should be a fun little comic that I hope you folks will enjoy.

And yes, one of the reasons for this story is so that Networks *could use that headline...*

Chris Bunting's COMICS WEBWORLD

*A change of tack this month, as I cast an eye over sites that are dedicated to the British comics scene past and present. For those who wonder where Brit stalwart **2000 AD** is in all this, look out for my column focusing exclusively on it soon.*

CAPTAIN BRITAIN www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/7498/excalibur/britain.html
This wouldn't be complete without a look at our very own patriotic superhero, Brian Braddock aka Captain Britain. He first appeared in 1976 in Marvel UK's **Captain Britain Weekly** and then refused to be forgotten by moving to **Super Spider-Man** to **Hulk Comic** to **Marvel Superheroes** to **The Daredevils** to **Mighty World of Marvel** to **Captain Britain**, until finding a home in Marvel US's **Excalibur**. He now looks set to return in **Uncanny X-Men**, and this site, although not the most advanced or thorough, will certainly help refresh readers' memories. **5**

DEATH'S HEAD *http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Gavs_Home/death/death.htm*
Like Captain Britain, Death's Head has the very rare distinction of being a Marvel UK character who went on to be prolific in Marvel US. Indeed this 'Freelance Peacekeeping Agent' crossed paths with everyone from Doctor Who and She-Hulk to the Fantastic Four and the Transformers. The solid history section here will fill you in far better than I can, but overall this site needs more content and more updating, yes? **6**

OINK! *www.oinkcomic.co.uk*
Born during the Eighties as a preview issue in **Buster**, **Oink!** was a controversy-courting comic, so much so that WHSmith refused to place it with other childrens' titles. Despite this, it lasted a respectable 68 issues, helped launch the careers of creators such as Lew Stringer and Tony Husband, and was even a precursor to successes of today such as **TOXIC**. This site is nothing to be scoffed at, and provides a huge array of features: comic strips, cover pics, background info, merchandise and lots more. Oink-credible! **9**

LOOK-IN ARCHIVE *www.lookinarchive.com*
Look-In, a weekly comic/features title based on whatever TV shows were successful at that particular time, ran from 1971-1994 (that's over 1,200 issues). It featured interviews, puzzles, pinups, and most notably, original comic strips. This vast online vault contains a selection of these strips, as well as cover pics, and info. And if you're a **Look-In** collector, you may well be able to aid this impressive site's expansion. **8**

SNOWMAN OFFICIAL *www.thesnowman.co.uk*
The ever-prolific London-born cartoonist Raymond Briggs is well known for many stories, including **Father Christmas**, **Fungus the Bogeyman**, and **When the Wind Blows**, but most famously for **The Snowman** tale. This official site brings you news, games, facts, and even a 'snowshop'. The design of this animated site is completely in keeping with the ambience of **The Snowman**, making it a place every fan will thoroughly enjoy. **9**

TV ANNUALS *www.tvannuals.co.uk*
Don't let the name fool you, this nicely laid-out venture covers all manner of British hardback annuals: **Eagle**, **Warlord**, **Mandy** and **Beano**, to name but a few. In fact there are over 660 annuals already listed and if you're an annual aficionado, willing to offer assistance, you should drop the site's staff an email. **8**

Honourable mentions: **Comics UK** *[www.comicsuk.co.uk]*, **Dandy** *[www.dandy.com]* and **Striker Comic** *[www.striker3d.net]*.

Rich Johnston's LYING IN THE GUTTER

continued from previous page...

asking for a man with a family to support to be fired, in order that a silly comicbook is published.

The **New York Observer** article quote is three years old and Joe, while clearly intending to insult the company, cited no DC employee by name. Currently, DC has decided they know what to do with Batman and Superman – hiring name talent on the titles to gain attention, and spinning off an Ultimate-style imprint.

Bob Wayne also used the opportunity to make cheap shots against Bendis using Micah Wright's name. Bendis twisted that back, stating that Wright was Wayne's employee.

Coincidentally, before Micah's true history was revealed, I understand Bob Wayne had a big problem when Micah Wright also publicly brought a DC publishing matter into the open by drumming up Amazon-buying support for the cancelled **StormWatch** trade. Again, when done privately this is the norm, on a public platform Wayne's often been much more restrained. And I'm told that certain DC employees are rather annoyed by how this has all been played out by DC. Bob Schreck for one.

Bendis may be frustrated, he may genuinely want to see this project [**Daredevil/Batman**] come to fruition, he may genuinely believe this the only way to get this project made. But history with other creators should have taught him differently. Bendis should have known that bringing this project out into the open – by talking about a private phone call he'd had with Paul Levitz on this matter – will guarantee it will definitely not be happening in the near future.

DC doesn't take kindly to being manipulated openly, and for their publishing decisions to be made open fodder – I should know. Given this kind of exposure, they dig their heels in. This will only harden their current decision and make them even less malleable on the issue. Bendis has committed the sin that John Layman, Micah Wright and Mark Millar made before him, and he should have known the consequences.

Any publicity this brings will be just that. Publicity. DC seen as the bad guys, Brian and Marvel seen as the good guys and Bendis seen as the writer everyone wants to talk about. Look, it's worked.

Burn!

A week ago, Dave Gibbons received a copy of the *Justice League Unlimited* episode *The Man Who Has Everything*. He told me,

"I really enjoyed it. I thought the adaptation and compression of the material was very well handled. The variances from the original made sense and the dream Krypton actually exploding was an inspired idea (as with the matching gun-flash in Batman's fantasy). The direct quotes from Alan's script and my art were particularly satisfying and I loved seeing the pictures actually move!"

He's Created a Monster

Frazer Irving, the 12 year old telling people he's 32, is working on a **Frankenstein** graphic novel with Gary Reed (cover logo designs by Jim Steranko). 144-page book, manga digest sized, black and white. Aimed at a "younger" market, it's bookstore distributed by Penguin and published by iBooks.

Blind Items

Some San Diego gossip was even too hot for me to print... Which major comics company procured hard drugs for a staff member? What senior comic editor walked up to a bunch of pros in the Hyatt bar, stopped for a moment and said, "I'm sorry, I'm completely stoned" then ran away? Which artist left the con early every afternoon and spent most every evenings at cheap strip bars?

That last one may have more than one answer...

Reviews

Because few retailers allow titles to be read before purchase, CI's comprehensive reviews section enables comics readers to keep abreast of the wide range of titles currently being published and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section is of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a title after purchase.

***Review codes:** Individual titles are judged against all similar comics past and present on a **1** to **10** basis, while a comparison is made against previous issues of the same title, ranging from <—> to <+++>. Hence, a quality comic may score an 8 against all others, but have slid from a previous issue's 9, denoted by <->. No change is marked <=>. We do not compare **Bone** with **X-Men**, but review each within their genre.*

***Review panel:** Chris E. Bunting (CEB), Rob Cave (RC), Jon Edwards (JE), James Gibbs (JG), Stephen Hall (SH), David Knight (DK), Keiron Mullens (KM), Ian Murphy (IM), Lee Nelon (LN), Rob Nott (RN), Terence Stewart (TS), Alex Thompson (MAT)*

Dark Horse

Conan 6

by Busiek & Nord

<=> When this series began we were promised faithful adaptations of the original REH stories, interspersed with original tales to bridge the gaps. What we've had for the past few months is basically an extended retelling of issue two of the Marvel colour series, and frankly it's not a tale that stands up to such extended treatment, even if the treatment itself is quite good. The art remains excellent, but the series does need to pick up pace and move on. The original stories so far haven't fulfilled the promise that the intro suggested. (RN) 6

The Moth 3

by Martin & Rude; Rocket Comics

<=> Unlike like the Yank-manga style of its Rocket Comics stable mates, Steve Rude and Gary Martin's series comes from a more traditional vein of story and art. As well as Rude's clear retro design sense, Martin's script harks back to a more naïve sense of fun superheroics. This doesn't make for a challenging read, but is full of the escapist fun lacking in most mainstream comics. (MAT)6

DC Comics

Batman: Gotham Knights 55

by Lieberman & Barrionuevo + Portela

<-> The rivalry between Hush and the Joker leads to another face-off in Gotham. The story is showing a tendency to go round in circles, although writer A.J. Lieberman lays the groundwork for a couple of potentially entertaining diversions. Hopefully the introduction of yet another guest villain won't be used as a substitute for story development. (DK) 6

Bionicle: Metru Nui 19

by Farshtey & Elliott

Vakama and the heroic Toas begin to suspect a double-cross but with the dangerous Dark Hunters closing in, they might not get chance to go public and share it. Based on Lego's super-successful Bionicle toy line, this isn't your average poorly related spin-off, as the events here cannily tie-in to those of the movies, books and website. Fun for the fans. (CEB)7

Ex Machina 2

by Vaughan & Harris + Feister; WildStorm

<-> The Mayor convinces the police commissioner to stay on and work with his administration; but a controversial painting proves to be his biggest political headache. It's a relief that Brian K Vaughan's plot is more than the 'superhero solves all the city's problems with superpowers' cliché, and involves the Mayor in everyday politics. Tony Harris's pencils fluctuate in quality, latterly pegging expressions and framing scenes that are powerfully orchestrated. Hit and miss. (IM) 6

<=> Tony Harris on art duties is enough to make this comic a recommendation alone, but the story too is very strong. Exploring the ramifications of an only superhero in the real world who decides to go public with his identity and run for mayor, it explores the time honoured question of, if Superman or Captain America ran for office, would you vote for them? And if they actually got in, would they be any good at the job? Ex Machina has got off to a great start and has all the makings of a classic series. (RN) 8

<=> Brian K Vaughan reveals more of the master of machines' past, showing his tempestuous relationship with the feisty police commissioner; while his present Mayoral career sees him face a major question of political correctness. Vaughan skilfully restates the norms of powers and responsibilities for this intriguing new series. But it is Tony Harris's clearly stated linework – realistic, yet not overly wrought – that is the main selling point. (MAT) 8

Fallen Angel 13

by David & Lopez + Blanco

<=> Somebody comes after Asia the drug dealer, but with him under her protection, what will Lee the angel do about it? This impressive comic, by Peter David and ChrisCross-like artist David Lopez, is getting minimal attention right now, as its allocated neither a DCU or Vertigo label. (CEB) 7

Gotham Central 21

by Brubaker & Lark + Gaudiano

<+> Detectives investigate how the Mad Hatter, Penguin and two high-school geeks were connected to a school bombing. Michael Lark's pencils are fascinating, and his work with Stefano Gaudiano is some of the best art in comics today. The colours are always magnificent, illuminating and often helping tell the story, while the inking adds an evocative and tender touch to the already eloquent pencils. The plot is trundling a little, but glimpses into each officer's lives make it a superior read. (IM) 8

Identity Crisis 3

by Meltzer & Morales + Bair

<=> The gruelling miniseries continues. This chapter opens with Deathstroke almost defeating most of the Justice League single-handedly, and the shocks continue after that! Green Arrow steals the show, but all of this story's many characters have been handled well by Brad Meltzer. Rags Morales and Michael Bair continue to impress on the art side. (SH) 9

<-> Uh oh! Plot flaws are starting to show; why was the silly (and not particularly well staged) fight with Slade not pre-empted by Zatanna the very moment he appeared? Why hasn't Zee simply exclaimed "rellik s'euS em wohs, stirips hO" and been done with it? Meltzer is keen to tell us she's the most powerful of the lot, but so far she's been a bit of a boob. Morales' art is slowly deteriorating, with some pretty useless headshots of Supes to wince at, and the earlier promise is rapidly evaporating, along with the hero's supporting casts. A chicken drew the cover. (TS) 6

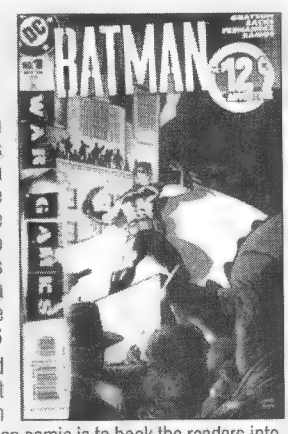
JLA 102

by Austen & Garney

<=> The Flash has to come to terms with the fact that he can't save everyone. Ron Garney's artwork is exuberant and fluid, and Chuck Austen's words convey the lead character's emotions with crystal clarity. The plot will be familiar to anyone who read JLA #101, but this time a different hero is under the spotlight (next month: Green Lantern). (DK) 7

Batman: The 12c Adventure

by Grayson & Bachs + Fernandez + Ramos



Spoiler observes a meeting of gang bosses. Devin Grayson succeeds in finding Stephanie's voice as a dejected teen trying to prove her right to a costumed identity even though she's still unsure herself. Ramon Bachs' confident pencils are generally effective, although his Bruce Wayne is too squarely drawn. As a primer for this summer's Batman-title crossover, this is okay, but as a standalone it does little beyond explaining the status quo to new readers. (IM) 6

As the saying goes, you get what you pay for. And in this case, 12c buys you a story that just about scrapes in as below average fan-fic. Devin Grayson either doesn't understand that the point of a cheap comic is to hook the readers into buying the rest of the story (see the superb Dark Horse Conan #0) or she's incapable of delivering the goods. There is nothing about the way she handles the plot, characterization, or dialogue that marks this out as a professional product. And the run of the mill art only serves to de-evolve the package further. (RN) 3

The Losers 14

by Diggle & Jock + Dragotta; Vertigo

<=> The team comes to the aid of the besieged CIA office in Qatar, much to Agent Stegler's annoyance, in a bid to uncover the mysteries surrounding the Max identity and his interest in a disused oil rig. Andy Diggle wraps his agency conspiracy theories with Tarrantino-style cool talk and action violence making this far from the norm for a Vertigo title. Jock's layouts intensify the drama and conflict, but are somewhat lost under Nick Dragotta's less spiky artwork. (MAT) 8

Plastic Man 8

by Baker

<+> Woozy is confused by Plas's gritty comicbook exploits, but things get even more confusing when his son and wife turn up, only to be kidnapped by the Time Trapper while Abraham Lincoln is left in their hands! Kyle Baker continues his assault on the pretensions of DC, satirising comic continuity gaffs. His sense of manic fun coupled with '70s animation-style artwork perfectly capture the daft superhero's crazed exploits. (MAT) 7

Seaguy 3

by Morrison & Stewart; Vertigo

<+> Stranded out at sea, our hallucinating hero is captured by scavenging Egyptian Moon dogs, but does he uncover the secrets of the sinister Mickey Eye corporation? Like hell he does, folks; remember this is a cryptic Grant Morrison script! Still, it is full of the usual Morrison surreal paranoia and the possibility is left open for further mini-series of this fruitful collaboration with Cameron Stewart, who infuses our hero's sinister world with a fresh-faced naivety. (MAT) 7

Superman: Birthright 12

by Waid & Yu + Alanguilan

<=> The conclusion to the latest take on the Man of Steel's origin. While this series has hit all the right buttons, it has not matched the excitement of John Byrne's 1986 revamp. One wonders how the two versions will be reconciled, if they ever are. The final page provides a poignant and innovative ending to the series. (SH) 8

Swamp Thing 6

by Diggle & Breccia; Vertigo

<=> Double-crossed by an evil magician, Swamp Thing (who is now reunited with his human soul) makes the ultimate sacrifice to stop Sargon gaining his elemental powers. Andy Diggle culminates the opening run on the DC muck monster, leaving a fresh page for future writers while making this reviewer wish he'd stay on indefinitely. Fortunately Enrique Breccia will be returning, bringing his suitably heavily etched gothic-style art to bear on the tortured elemental. (MAT) 8

The Witching 2

by Vankin & Gallagher; Vertigo

You can all but hear the storyline creaking and protesting under the strain as Vankin continues setting up his plot, but that aside, this is great stuff: clever, nasty and occasionally hilarious with lovely artwork. (DM) 8

Image

The Gray Area 2

by Brunswick & Romita Jr + Janson

<+> Disgraced New York Detective Rudy

Chance discovers the afterlife is less black and white than he thought, finding himself recruited to police the levels of the Gray Area. But will his crooked heart be cleansed so he may be reunited with his family? Glen Brunswick's script introduces the fantastica setting well, while John Romita Jr pours effort into the artwork to produce the many weird demons and odd characters. However, for a creator-owned work, the premise seems strangely impersonal and something of a wasted opportunity. (MAT) 6

Normalman Twentieth Anniversary Special

by Valentino

In a story 'wrote and drawred' by Jim Valentino and lettered by John Workman, the exuberant Captain Everything gets his own comic book and drags Norm along on a signing tour, satirising a slew of industry stereotypes and personalities that some of us never tire of seeing sent up. A back-up feature details Normalman's 22 appearances to date, and the *Normalman Goes Hollywood* strip from Epic Lite (1991) is reprinted. (DK) 6

Savage Dragon 115

by Larsen & Carlson + Englert

<-> A daring rescue by the Special Operations Strikeforce results in the customary body count, but not without a few surprises. Half of this 100-page issue is taken up with a pointless and ugly Freak Force reunion story, but back-up strips also include the continuation of *Mighty Man* and a six-pager spotlighting a comedy member of the Savage Dragon household. (DK) 6

Witchblade 73

by Wohl & Manapul + Gomez; Top Cow

<=> Some lovely visuals flow out from artist Francis Manapul, in this quick-paced mystery adventure about Sara (wielder of the Witchblade) investigating Level 42. This is part of the reality TV-esque "Death Pool" event, which culminates in two issues time when – via fans' votes – two main characters are killed off. (CEB) 7

The Walking Dead 9

by Kirkman & Adlard

<=> More deaths as the bus load of survivors discover their snug little refuge is actually Hotel Zombie, and the inhabitants come out to play once the big thaw kicks in. As with all horror movies, the second string characters show very little in the way of common sense as they quite happily blunder around, taking next to nothing in the way of precautions. And believe me you have to be pretty stupid to lose so many people to an undead enemy that can usually be outwitted simply by walking at a brisk pace in the opposite direction. (RN) 7

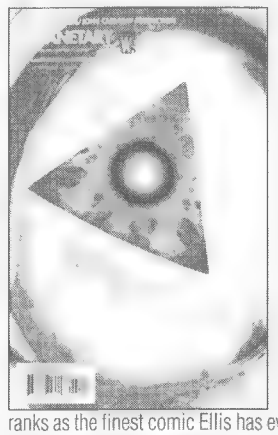
Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 510

by Straczynski & Deodato + Pimentel

<=> Writer J.Michael Straczynski builds in mystery and tension from start to finish in this dark tale concerning Gwen Stacy. Art team Mike Deodato and Joe Pimentel don't let a fraction of this tension go to waste, and visualise it with pinpoint accuracy. With no gimmicks, just great storytelling, this will have fans speculating in overdrive. (CEB) 8

Peter continues to piece together his past, reluctantly enlisting the help of the law along the way. This issue builds up to one hell of a cliffhanger, though Straczynski's plot is layered such that you are never quite being given the full picture. Deodato surprisingly shines in the dialogue heavy scenes, mixing shadows and light to good effect. (LN) 8



Planetary 20

by Ellis & Cassaday + Martin; WildStorm

Warren Ellis once said a good artist could make you look better than you ever deserve to look and he is certainly proven right here. This really is John Cassaday's issue while the plot consists of the Ben Grimm analogue character being marooned on a lump of rock on a slow journey out of the solar system. Disappointing. (RC) 5

<=> As good as this issue is (and it is good), it's primarily an exercise in storytelling by the artist, as the Planetary equivalent of Marvel's the Thing boards an alien spacecraft and journeys through it to his doom. Cassaday provides sumptuous art as we follow the creature's progress through the optical lenses of the good guys. Planetary probably ranks as the finest comic Ellis has ever written, and he's sensible enough to take a back seat and allow John Cassaday to strut his stuff when the need arises. This is one such issue and the effect is very cool indeed. (RN) 8

<=> Agent Snow and his team watch as the monstrous member of the Four enters the derelict spaceship on the edge of the solar system, but Snow's brutal takedown sets suspicions amongst the others. Cassaday's outstandingly rendered art more than meets the standards of Ellis's epic vision. In fact you'd be forgiven for remembering that this is more of Ellis's smart superheroics wrapped up in hard-edge sci-fi, as it's far removed from the standard spandex brigade. (MAT) 8

Captain America 30

by Kirkman & Eaton + Geraci

<=> As promised, writer Robert Kirkman's Captain America run is less about Cap fretting over the state of America today and more about fighting costumed villains. In this issue, Cap battles the daft French bad guy Batroc at a baseball game, and later gets captured by the Serpent Society. Meanwhile, the Red Skull gets some nifty new armour. Entertaining stuff, with some nice art from Scot Eaton and Drew Geraci. (SH) 7

Captain America/ The Falcon: Madbomb

by Kirby

Back in 1975, Jack Kirby returned to chronicle the adventures of the Star-Spangled Avenger in Captain America #193-200, which have never before been reprinted. These stories are very much of their time as the characterisation is wafer-thin and the plot is insane (royalist terrorists based in an underground community attempt to turn every US citizen crazy via a giant "madbomb"). This is worth reading for Kirby's dynamic artwork at its best. (SH) 6

Astonishing X-Men 3

by Whedon & Cassaday

When a cure is found for the mutant gene, some welcome it ... others certainly do not. The writing, with its twists and turns, action, and command of X-characters, is wonderful, and establishes Joss Whedon as a major new player in comicdom. The artwork by John Cassaday is equally fantastic, and he even makes Cyclops look cool. A run that will rival that of Morrison/Quitely's. (CEB) 8

<=> Is the supposed mutant cure real and is Henry willing to take the medication if it is? This series is a bit of a slow burn, which would be worrying for most 12-issue storytelling partnerships, but thankfully the build up here includes more entertaining closely observed character interactions than most other comics can convey in their whole run. (RC) 8

<++> Amid beautiful artwork, Beast and Wolverine clash over what to do about the proposed new 'cure' for mutants. Is it for real? And worse still... just what DNA have they been experimenting with? Whedon writes some cutting, vibrant and memorable dialogue, but thus far his plotting is amounting to little more than a hill of beans. Villain Ord doesn't impress or frighten me and his abilities are too undefined to take seriously. Cassaday, though, offers up beautiful work, dreamy landscapes and cleverly-lit espionage scenes. (IM) 8

<=> The team of Whedon and Cassaday is a dream ticket combination for Marvel. By issue three they're both clicking very well on this title, and Whedon's flair for dialogue, characterisation and tight plotting/continuity puts him head and shoulders above anyone else who has written a mutant title – Morrison included. Under Whedon's direction the cast of characters appears less arrogant than usual and consequently more human. The emotions feel more realistic and the subtleties in the character interactions all the more profound. This is a high quality comic from one of the very best genre writers in the business. (RN) 8

<-> The fallout from the cure for mutation set tensions high amongst Xavier's Institute and the team members, but they are in for a greater shock regarding the test subject for the experiments. Whedon is a more than capable writer for the title, capturing the classic team dynamic and creating decent dialogue rather than rambling monologues. Cassaday's clean realistic linework is as impressive as ever, giving an edge to the otherwise standard superhero soap operatics. (MAT) 7

Captain Marvel 25

by David & Giffen + Gordon

<++> The humour, which helped define this series and missing of late, returns for this final adventure. The best last issue to a comic series of all time, it's little wonder that Stan Lee recently called Peter David "the greatest comic book writer in the business!" That's not all: Keith Giffen brings remarkably apt pencils, and ChrisCross and Chris Sotomayor come out swinging with a great cover. All that's left to say to those involved in the past 60 issues is: thank you. (CEB) 10

Daredevil 62

by Bendis & Maleev

<++> Black Widow and Daredevil face off against Jigsaw, and nearly get jiggy. Brian Michael Bendis draws out the complexities of the man Matt Murdoch through his conversations with the Widow and Jigsaw, and Alex Maleev's epic, breathtaking art continues to be the other towering success of this book – but his action panels do lack a certain 'oomph' this time. Maleev's use of light and shade is impeccable in both the last meeting with Jigsaw and his explanation to Natasha of his marital status. A meeting of giants. (IM) 8

<=> Still the 'leader of the pack' when it comes to superhero comics, though not in a 'crash your motorcycle and die tragically young' kind of way. The Black Widow story line continues the impeccable quality of the Bendis/Maleev run, and I'm reminded just how lucky Matt Murdock has been with some of his girlfriends in the past. Natasha Romanov and Elektra – the lucky dog. Not that Matt really appreciates them until they're gone, of course. (RN) 9

<=> Black Widow parading in front of the media causes more pressure on the US government. Meanwhile Matt Murdock has an ugly run-in with a criminal wishing to pay his dues. Brian Michael Bendis plays with the ramifications of DD's identity being revealed, but equally manages to bring new plot developments and ideas into the mix. Alex Maleev's suitably grim depiction of Hell's Kitchen and its denizens is fantastically atmospheric, while his rendition of the mutilated Jigsaw will have you reaching for the barf-bag. (MAT) 8

District X #3

by Hine & Yardin + Sicat

<++> 'Shaky' Kaufman kidnaps drug-producing Toad Boy, sparking a gang war. David Hine's pace and plotting are moving up a few gears now and, even though Bishop rarely appears, the book still feels tense and exciting rather than decompressed. The supporting cast continues to intrigue, and Alejandro Sicat's inks are good at drawing out the mystery in David Yardin's usually reliable pencils. (IM) 7

Exiles 50

by Bedard & Sakakibara

<+> Destiny predicts the arrival of the Exiles in a world where everyone has freak reactions to Calvin Rankin – but why? And why is he wrong to assume their mission is to free Magneto? Tony Bedard's plot is well set-up and promises an exhilarating arc, but his scripting can feel hammy, even when he explores important character moments such as Beak's difficulties in helping any Magneto

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Avengers 500

by Bendis & Finch

Jack of Hearts returns – and explodes everything. Literally. Then an army of Ultrons turn up. Ouch. Plus half the team seems to be going crazy. Brian Michael Bendis's plot has yet to come together, but has enough hints and threats to hold interest. David Finch's Captain America is sexy, and Frank D'armata's dark reds and browns mean the colours really emphasise the chaotic, war-like situation. The art team has upped the game since their *Ultimate X-Men* run, although Hawkeye looks too much like Ultimate Angel close up, and the wide-screen, multi-page explosions feel self-indulgent. (IM) 6

<+> An ordinary day at the mansion soon becomes one the team will never forget. Bendis's Avengers armageddon sees disaster follow disaster, to the extent that each subsequent event does begin to lose a little impact. Finch impresses in these hectic circumstances, with The Vision's meltdown and She-Hulk's berserker rage of particular note. (LN) 6

<+> Bendis takes on Marvel's flagship hero title in an attempt to bring it up to date, but first he goes about shaking the team to its foundations with no end of tragic events. Bendis's smart dialogue is occasionally off-key for the characters, but mainly he lets the action speak for itself. And what action it is, as the real pull of the title – Finch's artwork – shows the team in all their glory. His muscular, detailed, yet dark and moody style can't fail to impress: even more impressively, he sticks to a monthly schedule. (MAT) 8

after his *New X-Men* betrayal. Mizuki Skakibara's art leaves Sasquatch looking more wet dog than fearsome beast, but is generally quite good. (IM) 6

Fantastic Four 515

by Waid + Kesel & Medina

<=> The Frightful Four pounce, but is it an assault or a PR exercise? Mark Waid and Karl Kesel craft a great adventure, yet wisely they never lose sight of the characters, not even for a moment. Paco Medina and Juan Vlasco are the finest stand-in art team that you could ask for. (CEB) 8

Powers 2

by Bendis & Oeming; Icon

<=> Retro girl is back, or is she? As the city crumbles under the pressure of super villains off the leash, with no heroes prepared to break the law in order to stop them, one familiar masked girl takes a stance for truth, justice and the American way. Playing nicely to the theme of 'is it okay to break the law to save people's lives?' the series focuses, with its usually high standard of dialogue, on such moral ambiguities. Powers is back on form after the *Highlander 2* back-story and the move to a Marvel imprint hasn't seemed to hurt it one jot. (RN) 7

<=> Has the murdered Retro Girl returned from the grave just as superpowers are outlawed? That's the question for detectives Walker and Pilgrim as they attempt to bring the new criminal networks down. Brian Michael Bendis continues to surprise under his title's new publishers, showing Pilgrim's violent side and another shocking revelation about Walker. While Mike Oeming's bulky artwork captures the intensity of the series, it's helped in no small part by Peter Pantazis' moody colouring. Oh, and the personal ads are worth the price alone. (MAT) 7

Pulse 4

by Bendis & Bagley + Hanna

<=> Still bad, with no sign of getting any better, unless the return of old Alias artist, Michael Gaydos can make a difference in the future. The Pulse is a comic that just feels wrong. The execution, the dialogue, the characterisation – it's all so off key as to be painful. Reading this is like seeing the Doors live in 1969, expecting a slim Jim to sing Light My Fire and getting instead a big fat drunk Jim Morrison bellowing and grunting and talking crap for ten minutes because he can't be bothered to sing any songs. The Pulse is the Second Stone Roses album: i.e. not good at all. (RN) 4

Spectacular Spider-Man 17

by Jenkins & Ramos + Faucher

<++> Captain America recruits SHIELD to help him trace Spider-Man, fearful of the effects of Ana's kiss; while Peter Parker feels weirdly sick. Paul Jenkins finally adds a little substance to the plot, offering up information on Ana's origins, motivations and organisation. His scripting of MJ and Peter is crisp, but the issue is strengthened by blockily awkward Humberto Ramos pencils; although expressive, there's a gawky clumsiness to their look that is slowly, unexpectedly, charming me. (IM) 7

Thor 83

by Oeming + Berman & DiVito + Villari

<++> Beta Ray Bill arrives in time to drive out Asgard's enemies, too easily, as Michael Avon Oeming & Daniel Berman's plot is more concerned with Thor's future, and in providing a masterclass of revisiting a book's history by making it an important part of the current story and not cheap padding . Andrea DiVito's art continues to impress with striking detail and vibrant arrangements, which are strengthened by Laura Villari's complimentary colouring. (IM) 7

Ultimate Fantastic Four 9

by Ellis & Immonen
+ von Grawbadger

<-> The team explores their powers in the face of Doom's flying robotic bugs. This team are quick learners, and are already using their powers with a fluency and ease that took their 616 versions decades to learn; and it's great to see Sue a shrinking violet no more. Stuart Immonen's massive Thing is an impressive sight, but Dave Stewart's colours fluctuate in their shading where they shouldn't, detracting from the mood. (IM) 6

<-> I know this is supposed to be an alternative take on the FF, but even so, that's no reason to give each of the characters a personality bypass. Johnny Storm is annoying; Reed Richards is dull and Sue Storm is the standard 'Warren Ellis Female Character' (one size fits all). Reading this I'm

left with the feeling that I really don't care what happens to any of them. It's an average comic, on a downward slide towards mediocrity. (RN) 5

<+> Warren Ellis's return to mainstream superheroes more than impresses as the young and newly altered team push their powers to the limit to stop the insane Dr Doom's robotic insects. Ellis is marvellous at bringing a sense of believability to the team's fantastical adventures, but he also manages to depict the team's friendly banter. The only let-down is Stuart Immonen's artwork: its looseness and lightness doesn't seem suited to Ellis's hard sci-fi concepts. (MAT) 7

Ultimate X-Men 49

by Vaughan & Peterson

<=> Can the trainee mutants defend themselves against Apocalypse's assassin, Sinister? Brian K Vaughan choreographs an exciting fight, but it doesn't stands scrutiny. There are too many things even this inexperienced crew, and Xavier, could or should have done differently to make the battle credible. Nonetheless the story is superficially tense and often well depicted by Brandon Peterson. Improving on recent issues, he draws a nasty Sinister, an impressive Iceman and clearly has talent. (IM) 6

Uncanny X-Men 447

by Claremont & Davis + Farmer

<=> The X-Men showdown with the Fury in an intense battle which, to its detriment, is told more than shown, making the reader feel on the outside looking in. To this title's credit however, Chris Claremont knows these characters inside-out and his dialogue is world class, while Alan Davis makes it all look super-smooth, and there's even a letters page. But will Captain Britain ever make a comeback? (CEB) 7

<->The fight with The Fury climaxes. The conclusion feels forced, won so much by technological means, but it also harks back to the first M'Kraan crystal story, which is a sweet touch for Rachel's first outing as Marvel Girl. Even so, the plotting doesn't impress me this month, and the story needed another issue or two to effectively show how difficult The Fury is to fight. Alan Davis' clean art makes this a fluid read, and given that so much is going on, is a triumph on its own. (IM) 5

Witches 3-4

by Walsh & Conrad

A story (for want of any better term) that could have told in 24 pages limps forlornly to a predictable ending in the sort of length that can be passed off as a graphic novel. Will Conrad's artwork is better than Mike Deodata's, but then so is a painful death from tertiary syphilis by most accounts. (DM) 2

X-Men Unlimited 3

by Nitz & Jeanty + Hillsman II, Raicht & Johnson

<—> Gambit pursues a crooked accountant, and Sam gets all big brotherly with Icarus. There's precious little substance to either story, although it is good to see Icarus get developed a little further. Don Hillsman II inks the life out of Georges Jeanty's already fragile pencils, but Stan Johnson's pencils show some promise (IM) 4

X-Men: The End Book One: Dreamers & Demons 1

by Claremont & Chen + Florea

Aliyah – daughter of Bishop and Deathbird – and the Starjammers try to foil Kree slavers and unintentionally release Phoenix. Chris Claremont's future farewell is packed but confusing. Seeing so little of the characters we know is frustrating, but should change next issue. Sean Chen's art is strong and reliable, and does well to keep it flowing given how much is packed onto every page. (IM) 5

US Indies

Animation Magazine Volume 137

by Zahed & Simon + various; Animation Magazine; $5.95

Comics and cartoons have a long, intertwined history, so it's little surprise that this magazine – which covers all aspects of animation – frequently strays into comicbook territory. Also covering videogames, movies, toys, and opportunities, this slick full-colour mag has appeal to fans and professionals alike. (CEB) 7

Dead@17: Blood of Saints 2

by Howard; Viper Comics

<-> This great-looking teen supernatural series continues, although with a worrying amount of recap exposition for a second issue. Not only does this slow down the pace, but surprisingly – especially as Josh Howard illustrates as well as writes – jumps all over the artwork. Nevertheless, this comic is likely

X-Statix 25

by Milligan & Allred + Crane

<=> It's Doop versus Thor! Sadly the fateful battle is a trifle dull and humourless, making a disappointing end to this sometimes superb Avengers-X-Statix clash. X-Statix realise they now act responsibly and selfless – so how can the pop-culture, fame-hogging team continue? While the story feels flat and underpar, Mike Allred's work is delectable, beautifully rendering the old-style, not so bright Thor, and a fascinating Asgard. Sadly, all good things come to an end – but this book is worth seeing out. (IM) 7

<+> The team win the respect of the Avengers, restoring Doop's missing brain parts in the final issue of Pete Milligan and Mike Allred's media-savvy mutants. Milligan surprises all by having the indecipherable green blob speak English and nearly vanquish Thor! Hopefully this isn't the end for the team, and once Allred finishes his Mormon book and Milligan gets bored with the X-Men, we'll see the return of these brilliantly refreshing characters. (MAT) 8

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to attract a loyal following and put Viper Comics on the map. (CEB) 6

Demo 8: Mixtape

by Wood & Cloonan; AiT/Planet Lar

<-> After the politically charged previous chapter, Brian Wood gets more personal, as a young man listens to a taped message from his deceased girlfriend. Although slightly confusing and tending to lay on thick the rather obvious, Wood effectively evokes the skewed perspectives of a doomed relationship. Becky Cloonan's manga-inspired loose brushwork mimics the naively romantic shojo style. (MAT) 6

Jack the Lantern 5

by Angelos & Vigil;
Castle Rain Entertainment

Jack takes control of Argotakar's body but by doing so alerts the enemy to their quest. Tim Vigil provides strong artwork to this fantasy-horror series, but Michael Angelos's script, while by no means sloppy, would benefit from less verbosity and more editing. (CEB) 6

Kyle Baker Cartoonist

by Baker;
Kyle Baker Publishing; $14.95

Kyle Baker's first self-published collection quickly cements the fact that he's one of the most talented cartoonists working in the field today. These humorous – and often personal – strips will be enjoyed equally by diehard Baker fans and those who are reading his work for the first time. Wonderful. (CEB) 8

Masters of the Universe Volume 3 #2

by Santalucia & Staples + Scott;
MVCreations

<=> Everybody wants Evil-Lyn. Her near-death condition causes both Prince Adam and the Faceless One to have a battle of conscience, and Skeletor to have a battle with his own temper. It all looks as great as ever thanks to Emiliano Santalucia and Enza Fontana, and scriptwriter Lori Ann Scott begins to find her feet. Mattel should be proud. (CEB) 7

Metal Hurlant 12

by various; Humanoids Publishing

<+> Another superb selection of European and American comics talents brought together under France's premier anthology title. Ladronn amazes with his highly detailed Kirby-meets-Moebius art, working with Alexandro Jodorowsky on a parable of family exploitation. US indie creators Rick Spears and Rob G explore the horrors of WWI, while Das Pastoras' muscular artwork illustrates Kurt McClung's recreation of the atrocities of the Crusades. The bleakness is lightened by the farcical B-movie horror of Jerry Frissen and Guy Davis's *Zombies That Ate The World*, as the unlikely heroes are called to save another rich client from the moronic undead. (MAT) 8

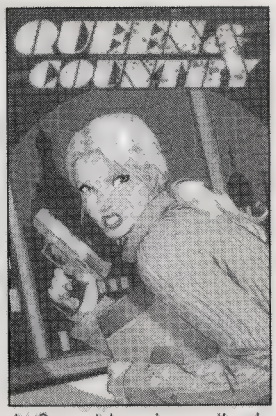
Ninja High School 115

by Bair & Bevard; Antarctic Press

<=> Katie Bair continues to prove that not only is she one of the finest artists working in American manga, she's also one of the finest writers. This issue she demonstrates that she can write suspense and intrigue just as competently as comedy, when a dark government agency takes interest in the students of Wunan High. (CEB) 7

Queen & Country 26

by Rucka & Norton; Oni Press



Chace and Poole travel to Russia to investigate a senior figure suspected of selling secrets there. I'm continually impressed by how much plot Greg Rucka fits in his pages, in this age of decompression, and this arc is off to a typically rattling start. It took me too long to grow accustomed to the black and white art and, while I yearn for more detail, Mike Norton brings clarity and tension to a book that in other artistic hands could easily be filed under confusing. (IM) 6

<+> A member of the government is taking unrecorded visits to Russia and MI6 smells a rat, especially when the tail they place on him gets beaten up by unknown agents. Of course, this being the murky cloak and dagger world of modern Le Carre-style espionage, there's probably a twist in the tail. The Government man is probably working some secret mission for HMG unknown to MI6, and Tara's department will be left with egg on their faces. Queen & Country is a very well written series that is consistently let down by the simple line art. If ever a series calls for more shades of grey in the inking, this is it. (RN) 7

Quagmire USA 2

by Dunn; Antarctic Press

<=> The rescue team is sent to aid Ricky in the fairy dimension, but could the team's lack of preparation put a spanner in the works? An elegant but fun manga fantasy by Ben Dunn, the creator behind Ninja High School, Warrior Nun Areala, and the Marvel Mangaverse. (CEB) 7

Sketchbook Diaries 4

by Kochalka;
Top Shelf Productions; $7.95

<=> My advice to those who think alternative comics the domain of the overly pretentious and solemn, is to pick up the work of Ignatz Award winning writer-artist James Kochalka. This creator never fails to impress, and his funny, bizarre and intimate diary strips published here are some of his finest work. (CEB) 8

Tales of the Realm 5

by Kirkman & Tyree; MVCreations

<=> The conclusion to this fun, often tongue-in-cheek, fantasy series written by new superstar, Robert Kirkman, and fabulously illustrated by Matt Tyree. If you've not had chance to catch this series, produced by the minds behind other strong offerings such as Masters of the Universe and Rob Zombie's Spookshow International, I'd recommend picking up the collected paperback. (CEB) 7

Twilight X: Storm 7

by Wight; Antarctic Press

<=> For those of you who have never read this, it's an interesting blend of epic war movie, disaster movie and sci-fi movie. The art style is equally eclectic, being part manga and part European. All of which is delivered with striking subtlety by writer-artist Joseph Wight. (CEB) 7

The Watch: Casus Belli 1

by Read & McKenny + Kwok;
Phosphorescent Comics

The Watch is a superhuman team of mercenaries with a difference: they're forcibly kept as members by their telepath leader. Lucifer invades Beijing, and so the Watch is sent in to contain him, which is easier said than done of course. The production value of this comic is top-notch, and creators Christian Read, Stewart McKenny and Annette Kwok do it justice. (CEB) 7

Canadian Indies

Sof' Boy and Friends 3

by Prewitt; Drawn & Quarterly

<=> The unremittingly cheery and kind-hearted ectoplasmic chap Sof' Boy returns, as he befriends a stray dog and unwittingly donates a gangster's loot to the waifs and strays of his cruel city. Archer Prewitt shows his masterful artwork and skilful colouring as he illustrates the adventures of the endlessly optimistic little character. (MAT) 8

UK Indies

Brodie's Law 1

by Grant + Osiyemi & Bircham;
Pulp Theatre Entertainment

Guns, drugs, revenge and soul switching... welcome to Brodie's Law. Jack Brodie gets involved in some messy business, which becomes even messier when those close to him are targeted. David Bircham's art is highly distinctive, carrying a blood red glow throughout, a moodiness bound to suit scriptwriter Alan Grant. A good opener for London-based Pulp Theatre. (CEB) 7

UK Newsstand

Astonishing Spider-Man 116

by Straczynski + Romita & Hanna/
Lee + Ditko; Panini UK

<=> Spidey's final desperate battle with Morlun is wonderfully realised, as is the long-awaited yet inevitable cliffhanger. Not so keen on Romita's stick-thin reinterpretation of Webhead, but his art is otherwise outstanding. Finally, back to the 1960s for a rematch with the Vulture, with a sparkling script from Stan Lee. (KM)8

The Avengers United 43

by Busiek + Davis & Farmer/
Lee + Kirby; Panini UK

<-> Things get much worse for the Avengers in this thrilling continuation of The Kang War. The mystery of the two Hank Pyms is rather disappointingly resolved, given its lengthy and suspenseful set-up. A Thor/Hulk clash from Journey Into Mystery is adequate filler, but not a patch on the regular classic strips. (KM) 6

Batman: Legends 11

by various; Panini UK

<=> Batman battles Jason Todd/ Robin II, back from the dead...or is he? Penguin swears vengeance on both the Dark Knight and Bruce Wayne in the second story, while Ra's Al Ghul makes his first appearance courtesy of Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams. This issue gets better with every page turned. (KM) 7

Dr Who Magazine 346

by Gray + Geraghty; Panini UK

What's this? A classic adversary? On Camden Lock? Scott Gray establishes a great premise, with a killer cliffhanger, proving what can be achieved in a mere eight pages. The (soon-to-be replaced) eighth Doctor's characterisation is so well realised that the fact that he only made one TV appearance is irrelevant. (KM) 7

Essential X-Men 116

by Claremont + Larocca/
Morrison + Kordey; Panini UK

<-> X-Treme's 'Nuff Said crossover doesn't quite work; you can almost sense Claremont's characteristic verbiage struggling to break through. Larocca's cluttered and unclear panels further confuse the story. Igor Kordey's art is similarly unappealing but can do little to dent two titanic tales from Morrison. Emma Frost is one kick-ass character! (KM) 7

Judge Dredd The Megazine 222

by various; Rebellion

<-> The Megazine is on a roll. Although this issue lacks the impact of Megazine #221, a high level of quality is maintained in all its stories and features. Near faultless artwork adorns every strip, and not one fails to be entertaining, even if some pack a greater punch than others. This issue's highlights include Judge Dredd in *Six*, Cursed Earth Koburn in *Kuss Hard*, and the ever-reliable *Charley's War*. (DK) 9

The Mighty World of Marvel (Vol 3) 20

by various; Panini UK

<=> *Child's Play* begins, finding Miller's (definitive?) Punisher and DD caught in a drug war. Superlative characterisation abounds. The Captain Marvel reprints (ostensibly Hulk strips) conclude, which sadly means more Trimpe next issue. However, a run of Steranko SHIELD stories (and a classic cover) bodes well for the next few months. (KM) 8

Spectacular Spider-Man 103

by Handley & Haward + Georgiou;
Panini Comics

<=> The Sandman attacks, but unfortunately for him, it's not only Spidey's attention that he catches. With an action-packed script from Ferg Handley and added dynamism brought by Jon Haward's pencils, this is a wild web-spinning read. Then there's cool competitions, free gifts, and fun features. (CEB) 7

Spider-Man 2: The Official Comic Adaptation!

by Aguirre-Sacasa & various;
Panini UK

Condensing years of comic book history into

a two-hour film which itself is adapted in forty-eight pages will inevitably be more miss than hit. Still, Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa turns in an enjoyable story, with some nice touches. The visuals, while not striking, are surprisingly consistent given that five artists are involved. (KM) 5

Toxic 23

by Bark & Daniels + various; Egmont Magazines

<=> Sci-fi, superheroes, fantasy and all things in between, you certainly get your money's worth with Toxic. If you're a fan of Lew Stringer, you really should be reading it for his headlining strip, Team Toxic, and for those who enjoy the work of Stu "Warhammer Monthly" Taylor and Paul "2000AD" Holden, their oddball superheroes, 'Nanas & Custard, will please. (CEB) 7

Toxic 24

by Paterson + Stringer & various; Egmont Magazines

<=> This issue includes Rex, a strip about a pet dinosaur by John Short and Alex Paterson, and the reliably disgusting strip, Team Toxic. Asterix and the X-Men feature in the videogame section, and Spider-Man and Justice League DVDs are also reviewed. A cool kids' mag. (CEB) 7

2000AD Progs 1399-1402

by various; Rebellion

<+> Prog 1399 ties up loose ends, and features an impressive Terror Tale, *Sorrow Hill* by Al Ewing and Shaun Thomas. Prog 1400 begins a run of contemporary 2000AD greatness, with Cam Kennedy drawing *Judge Dredd*, and Carlos Ezquerra on *Strontium Dog. Caballistics Inc.* makes a triumphant return. *ABC Warriors* has a playful and inventive script by Pat Mills and eye-catching artwork by Henry Flint to commend it. *Bec & Kawl* begin a new adventure in Prog 1401. (DK) 9

Ultimate Spider-Man 32

by Bendis + Hairsine & Miki; Panini UK

<+> Ultimate Six picks up pace considerably, with greater focus on the star of this title. Bendis again has an excellent ear for dialogue, although his take on George Dubya is somewhat unconvincing. Thankfully, this Sinister Six is so far shaping up to be a formidable threat, unlike the Earth-616 equivalents... (KM) 8

Ultimate X-Men 18

by Millar + Kubert & Miki; Panini UK

Colossus provides a straightforward solution to Magneto's global takeover, while Jean Grey unleashes the power of Phoenix to prevent a nuclear disaster. Equally gripping are Xavier's wily machinations to obtain the tacit support of the US administration and an intriguing take on Betsy Braddock/ Kwannon. Millar, he shoots, he scores... (KM) 8

Warhammer Monthly 83

by various; Black Library

<=> The horror-laden sci-fi and fantasy continues in this soon-to-be bi-monthly and renamed title. If you're a regular reader, this is as enjoyable as always, but its strength is also a weakness: to help new readers slot in to this often complex universe, a self-contained strip, such as Tales from the Ten-Tailed Cat, should be a regular addition. (CEB) 7

Wolverine & Gambit 102

by various; Panini UK

Boy, this stinks. The Captain America mini-series thankfully concludes, having offered nothing but clichés and muddily coloured art throughout. The 2001 Annual is similarly let down by ugly art and dull characters. Rounding this off is the consistently poor Gambit/Bishop series, which is an unjust swansong for this title's co-star. (KM) 4

Small Press

Armageddon Patrol: First Mission 3

by Short & Askham; Alchemy Texts, 20 Grants Avenue Bournemouth BH1 4NR

<-> John A Short brings the first mini-series of the adventures of his 'Nam mutant soldiers to a close, as the team investigate Vietcong tunnels and discover some uncomfortable truths about their powers and each other. Short brings some ambiguity after the gung-ho nature of previous issues, but still doesn't move beyond the usual clichés of the Vietnam conflict. Unfortunately, the series takes a further fall artistically as another loose and sketchy artist is employed to illustrate the story. (MAT) 6

Eagle Flies Again 10

by various; £2 from I. Wheeler 54 Hartwith Drive Harrogate HG3 2UY

This really isn't half bad. With very impressive design throughout (Red Eye Magazine take note!), it's an A4-sized black and white fanzine that covers the '80s Eagle along with other British comics. There's a feature on Grant Morrison's Dan Dare, and interviews with Alan Grant and somebody called Dez Skinn. All this plus a fun Dan Barton strip by John Freeman and Andrew Chiu. (CEB) 7

Future Quake 1

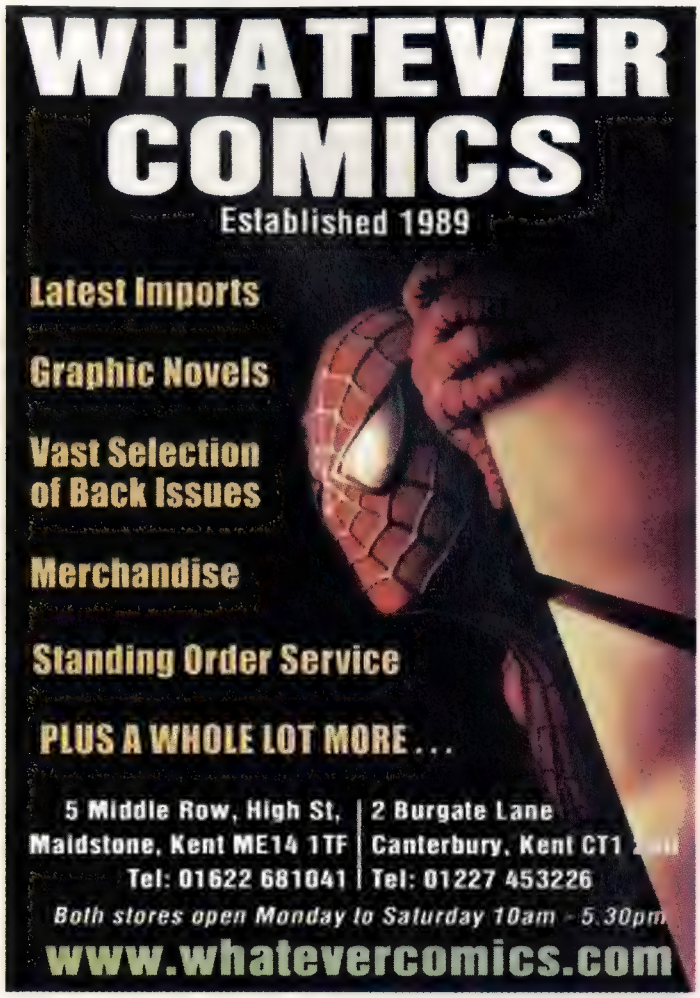
by various; £3 from Smallzone 10 Cleveland Avenue, High Ercall Telford, Shropshire TF6 6AH

A collection of six twist-in-the-tale short strips in the vein of 2000AD's *Future Shocks*. The stories in this well-presented anthology are a tad hit and miss, their overall execution traditional, old-skool Fleetway. And while all the visuals are mostly top-notch, of particular merit is Adrain Bamforth's crisp, confident linework and Matt Timson's dark, impressively individualistic style. (JE) 7

The Kaboom Review 10

by various; free from www.thekaboomreview.com

<-> A photo of sour-faced TV coroner Quincy stares earnestly out of the cover. Carefully holding up a microscope slide, he's saying, "On closer inspection you can see right up her smootchies". If that kind of wit floats your boat, you'll enjoy the ribald student humour from the self-styled Fanboy's Guide to Comics, Sleaze & Stuff. Despite reservations, this 16-page A5 book is genuinely funny and fresh – like Loaded meets *Bo' Selecta!*. And it's free. (JE) 6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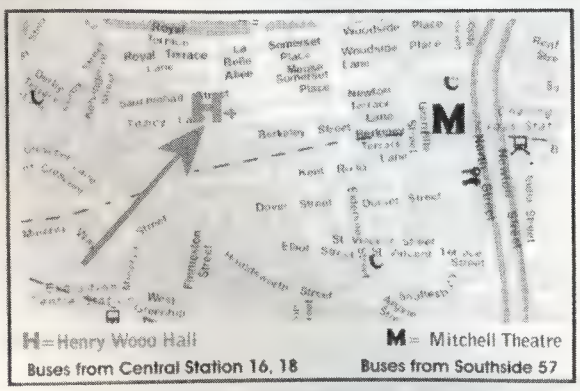

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Q&A

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Baffle us with comics questions, or save us with answers!

Yolande Pijcke??!

Mike Breen
29 Walpole Road
Bournemouth BH1 4HB

I KNOW this is about as obscure as it gets, and I've got half a mind it's been at least partially answered before, but... In **Amazing Adventures/War of the Worlds** #21 from 1973 the inking is credited to Yolande Pijcke, although it appears beyond any reasonable doubt to be the work of **MAD** Magazine's Jack Davis (or someone doing a stunningly good impression of him).

Assuming it was Jack Davis, I'd guess the pseudonym was necessary because he was moonlighting from his **MAD** contract, but can anyone shed any light on why he was suddenly inking an issue of a Marvel comic? Was Stan Lee or Herb Trimpe a mate, perhaps?

And if so where did the alias Yolande Pijcke come from?

You're right about the obscure bit, Mike... and you've got us stumped. Anybody out there care to help?

Overstreet boo-boos

Tim Barnes
(address withheld by request)

WHY does Overstreet contain so much duff information, deliberately duff, that is?

*It's traditional in the world of proving ownership. While it can frustrate readers, it backs up any allegations of theft. If a third party edition of a work includes the same mistakes, that's pretty good proof they unofficially "used" existing checklists/price guides/ whatever. We did the same in our **Toy Max** price guide for Star Wars.*

S.A.T.A.N.

John Miller,
Somewhere in the stick, Midlothian

SOMEBODY recently mentioned **S.A.T.A.N.**, a **Commando**-sized UK comic from the publishers of **Gemini 2000** and others. I think I can remember the storyline of *White Heat*. (title borrowed from the James Cagney gangster film of 1949, directed by Raoul Walsh):

Two agents of S.A.T.A.N. infiltrate and take over a thermonuclear research base in London, intending to detonate a thermonuclear device secreted there. The 'men from S.A.T.A.N.' were depicted wearing traditional black coats, trilby hats and black shades. They arm the thermonuclear device and a countdown to doom is initiated. An officer from 'British Intelligence' manages to start negotiating with the two S.A.T.A.N. agents in the control room of the research plant, by radio from an unspecified location. The countdown is stopped and a nuclear distaster averted.

I think the 'British Intelligence' man pointed out to the S.A.T.A.N. guys that they'd be frazzled along with the rest of London so they stopped the countdown.

Ultimate variants

Stephen Cranch via e-mail:
stephencranch@yahoo.com

FINALLY, I count 15 **Ultimate Spider-Man** #1 US variant editions:

Direct Edition
White cover variant
DF exclusive alternate cover Thermos back cover reprint, 12/2000
Kool Toys back cover reprint, 5/01
KB Toys reprint, 6/01
Got Milk back cover reprint, 6/01
Payless reprint 'E', 6/01
Checkers reprint 'G', 6/01
Payless reprint 'H', 9/01
Buster Brown back cover reprint, 6/01
Payless reprint 'F2', 1/02
FCBD reprint, 5/02
Mad Engine back cover reprint, 5/02
USM #14/15 reprint, 5/02

Can anyone tell me if I've missed any out?

Battle/Action Force

Danny Black via e-mail:
krimsun@hotmail.com

I RECENTLY liberated some copies of **Battle/Action Force** from my parents' loft. It was a joy thumbing through old issues, but not just because of the characters – meeting forgotten creative forces had me skipping down memory lane.

I've bugged three forums on the 'Net – *Comics Unintentional*, *Talking Comics* and *Comics2000* – for information on the creators but have only really revealed the whereabouts of the wonderful John Cooper (www.jcoopart.com) and Carlos Pino (now working on **Commando**).

So I'm left wondering what happened to Gerry Finley-Day, James Nicholas, Jim Watson, Vanyo and Redondo.

Also, how much money do I need to get hold of to purchase the rights to these strips? Are we talking 'lottery win' levels?

Forget about purchasing the rights, Danny. Given the convoluted history, you'd need lottery money to be able to afford to find out who even owns such!

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NEWCASTLE	**SATURDAYS: SEPTEMBER 4th, OCTOBER 16th** UNIVERSITY OF NORTHUMBRIA, STUDENTS' UNION BALLROOM, SANDYFORD ROAD, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
NOTTINGHAM	**SATURDAYS: AUGUST 21st, OCTOBER 30th** VICTORIA LEISURE CENTRE, GEDLING STREET, NOTTINGHAM
SHEFFIELD	**SATURDAY: OCTOBER 23rd** THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND, MAIN HALL, MAPPIN STREET (off West Street), SHEFFIELD *NEW VENUE!*

DEALERS: WRITE FOR INFORMATION PACK

SEND SAE FOR FULL DETAILS:- GOLDEN ORBIT, 18 OAK TREE WAY, STRENSALL, YORK Y032 5TF

E-MAIL: information@goldenorbit.co.uk

OPENS MIDDAY

Comics Economics

Top 100 US comicbook sales for April 2004

Superman up to #1

Rank	Prior	Title, Issue, Price & Estimated Orders	Publisher
1	(3)	**Superman #204** $2.50 (231,411)	DC Comics
2	(1)	**Superman/Batman #9** $2.95 (145,072)	DC Comics
3	(N)	**Spider-Man #1** $2.99 (137,314)	Marvel
4	(19)	**Marvel 1602 #8** $3.99 (103,213)	Marvel
5	(=)	**Ultimate Fantastic Four #5** $2.25 (102,648)	Marvel
6	(3)	**New X-Men #155** $2.25 (100,088)	Marvel
7	(6)	**New X-Men #156** $2.25 (98,785)	Marvel
8	(7)	**Ultimate X-Men #44** $2.25 (96,264)	Marvel
9	(5)	**Wolverine: The End #3** $2.99 (93,131)	Marvel
10	(8)	**Ultimate Six #7** $2.25 (91,663)	Marvel

Spider-Man in at #3

11	(8)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #56** $2.25 (91,585)	Marvel
12	(11)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #57** $2.25 (90,784)	Marvel
13	(10)	**Uncanny X-Men #442** $2.25 (86,975)	Marvel
14	(13)	**Uncanny X-Men 443** $2.25 (86,002)	Marvel
15	(11)	**Amazing Spider-Man #506** $2.25 (83,152)	Marvel
16	(1)	**Superman #205** $2.50 (78,519)	DC Comics
17	(2)	**Superman/Batman #10** $2.95 (71,060)	DC Comics
18	(3)	**Spider-Man #2** $2.99 (70,377)	Marvel
19	(3)	**Marvel 1602 #7** $3.00 (69,874)	Marvel
20	(5)	**Ultimate Fantastic Four #6** $2.25 (68,359)	Marvel
21	(7)	**New X-Men #157** $2.25 (68,170)	Marvel
22	(21)	**New X-Men #158** $2.25 (66,050)	Marvel
23	(8)	**Ultimate X-Men #45** $2.25 (65,791)	Marvel
24	(9)	**Wolverine End #3** $2.99 (64,284)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 60,000			
25	(10)	**Ultimate Six #7** $2.25 (56,714)	Marvel
26	(12)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #58** $2.25 (54,987)	Marvel
27	(26)	**Ultimate Spider-Man #59** $2.25 (54,955)	Marvel
28	(14)	**Uncanny X-Men #444** $2.25 (54,398)	Marvel
29	(28)	**Uncanny X-Men #445** $2.25 (52,953)	Marvel
30	(25)	**Spectacular Spider-Man #13** $2.25 (52,835)	Marvel
31	(27)	**X-Treme X-Men #45** $2.99 (51,563)	Marvel
32	(31)	**X-Treme X-Men #46** $2.99 (51,375)	Marvel
33	(21)	**Wolverine/Punisher #2** $2.99 (51,155)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 50,000			
34	(28)	**Conan #3** $2.99 (48,588)	Dark Horse
35	(41)	**Flash #209** $2.25 (47,543)	DC Comics
36	(36)	**Incredible Hulk #71** $2.25 (46,837)	Marvel
37	(34)	**Incredible Hulk #70** $2.25 (46,161)	Marvel
38	(35)	**Marvel Knights 4 #4** $2.99 (45,926)	Marvel
39	(38)	**Marvel Knights 4 #5** $2.99 (45,227)	Marvel
40	(30)	**Avengers/Thunderbolts #2** $2.99 (44,717)	Marvel
41	(1)	**Superman/Batman #8** $2.95 (43,437)	DC Comics
42	(37)	**Outsiders #11** $2.50 (43,130)	DC Comics
43	(44)	**Transformers: Generation One Vol 3 #4** $2.95 (43,083)	DreamWave
44	(40)	**JSA #60** $2.50 (42,824)	DC Comics
45	(25)	**X-Men Unlimited #2** $2.99 (42,597)	Marvel
46	(40)	**Avengers/Thunderbolts #3** $2.99 (40,759)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 40,000			
47	(31)	**Cable Deadpool #2** $2.99 (39,472)	Marvel
48	(45)	**Captain America #25** $2.99 (38,584)	Marvel
49	(48)	**Exiles #45** $2.99 (37,878)	Marvel
50	(47)	**Batman Gotham Knights #52** $2.95 (36,951)	DC Comics
51	(43)	**Captain America & Falcon #2** $2.99 (36,763)	Marvel
52	(39)	**Alpha Flight #2** $2.99 (36,551)	Marvel
53	(52)	**Superman: Birthright #9** $2.95 (35,200)	DC Comics
54	(51)	**Spawn #134** $2.50 (35,098)	Image

55	(53)	**Detective Comics #793** $2.95 (34,800)	DC Comics
56	(73)	**Green Lantern #176** $2.25 (34,674)	DC Comics
57	(32)	**The Punisher #5** $2.99 (34,2340)	Marvel
58	(54)	**New Mutants #11** $2.99 (34,148)	Marvel
59	(55)	**Green Arrow #37** $2.50 (34,124)	DC Comics
60	(58)	**New Mutants #12** $2.99 (33,481)	Marvel
61	(60)	**New Mutants #13** $2.99 (32,994)	Marvel
62	(77)	**Robin #125** $2.25 (32,923)	DC Comics
63	(58)	**Emma Frost #10** $2.99 (32,625)	Marvel
64	(66)	**Birds of Prey #66** $2.50 (31,525)	DC Comics
65	(60)	**Transformers: War Within Vol 2 #6** $2.95 (31,109)	DreamWave
66	(65)	**Thor #77** $2.99 (30,819)	Marvel
67	(56)	**She-Hulk #2** $2.99 (30,779)	Marvel
68	(78)	**Wonder Woman #203** $2.25 (30,418)	DC Comics
69	(50)	**Marvel Age: Spider-Man #2** $2.25 (30,363)	Marvel
■ International direct market retail orders estimated below 30,000			
70	(67)	**Mystique #13** $2.99 (29,759)	Marvel
71	(70)	**Thanos #9** $2.99 (29,704)	Marvel
72	(N)	**Marvel Age: Fantastic Four #1** $2.25 (29,641)	Marvel
73	(76)	**Nightwing #92** $2.25 (29,555)	DC Comics
74	(74)	**Iron Man #79** $2.99 (29,138)	Marvel
75	(74)	**Iron Man #80** $2.99 (28,809)	Marvel
76	(57)	**Iron Fist #2** $2.99 (28,432)	Marvel
77	(79)	**Hawkman #27** $2.50 (28,392)	DC Comics
78	(N)	**Arrowsmith: Astro City** $2.95 (27,961)	DC Comics
79	(61)	**GI Joe Reloaded #2** $2.95 (27,882)	Devils Due
80	(N)	**Batman: Harley & Ivy #1** $2.50 (27,882)	DC Comics
81	(80)	**Venom #13** $2.99 (27,537)	Marvel
82	(85)	**Y: The Last Man #21** $2.95 (26,720)	DC Comics
83	(N)	**Wanted Dossier One-Shot** $2.99 (26,335)	Image
84	(59)	**Swamp Thing #2** $2.95 (26,013)	DC Comics
85	(86)	**Transformers: Energon #22** $2.95 (25,990)	DreamWave
86	(95)	**X-Statix #21** $2.99 (25,911)	Marvel
87	(72)	**Batgirl #51** $2.50 (25,793)	DC Comics
88	(97)	**Aquaman #17** $2.50 (25,691)	DC Comics
89	(81)	**Street Fighter #7** $4.50 (25,597)	Devils Due
90	(84)	**Silver Surfer #8** $2.99 (25,542)	Marvel
91	(90)	**Weapon X #21** $2.99 (25,527)	Marvel
92	(88)	**Fables #24** $2.50 (25,464)	DC Comics
93	(75)	**Batman: Death & Maidens #8** $2.95 (25,385)	DC Comics
94	(91)	**Weapon X #22** $2.99 (25,283)	Marvel
95	(83)	**Thor: Son of Asgard #3** $2.99 (25,110)	Marvel
96	(86)	**X-Statix #22** $2.99 (24,993)	Marvel
97	(91)	**Legion #32** $2.50 (24,608)	DC Comics
98	(94)	**Catwoman #30** $2.50 (24,286)	DC Comics
99	(92)	**Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #178** $2.50 (24,145)	DC
100	(N)	**Bite Club #1** $2.95 (24,043)	DC Comics

With thanks to Milton Griepp and ICv2.com

Letters

CI, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (editorial@comicsinternational.com)

A TRUNCATED letters column because of space this month. We'll try to make it up to you next issue because we are, as always, innundated with interesting opinions. You know, even after almost 15 years, I'm loving every minute of this job! ...Dez Skinn/editor

Striker strikes back

Pete Nash
Creator and publisher: **Striker**

MANY thanks to **CI** for saving us the trouble of consulting our accountants to calculate that raising **Striker**'s cover price from £1 to £1.25 would bring us some extra revenue ("Striker Shares It Out", *News*, **CI** #175).

We were, however, one step ahead on this occasion, as we had announced in July that we were raising our price to £1.50 on August 5th.

Your writer's assertion that a price increase would boost our profits was incorrect in as much as we are not making any profits and will not for at least another year. The increase was one of a number of measures aimed at reducing our losses to break even. This would mean that the £202,375 raised by readers will go towards relaunching the comic next year and not on funding our losses.

The success of our shares offer to readers was a phenomenal accomplishment by any standards, particularly as the money was raised in just six weeks. So to say "this is not the first time a British comics publisher has asked for its readers to help finance projects" is not only trivialising our achievement but is also factually wrong.

Unlike Rebellion's attempt to raise finance for a film venture, we had told our readers that the shares issue was to save **Striker** from folding (not bankruptcy, by the way. There's a difference).

None of this means we are out of the woods. We are bound to lose some sales as a result of such a steep price increase but if the drop is too steep then we will be back to square one. However, our readers understand how difficult things are so I am hoping they will continue to support us – unlike the dinosaurs at my bank and in the comics industry.

No desire to trivialize your amazing feat was intended, Pete. In fact, the failed precedent underlines how well your bid worked.

*As for the comics industry dinosaurs, it's interesting to note in this very issue's news that another new (US) sports comic is being produced. That Diamond will probably offer it to comic shops makes their decision not to carry **Striker** (as we believe) all the more bizarre. Their assumption on behalf of their customers without a trial – by retail jury or by sales – makes their role less that of wholesaler and more one of precognitive censor. We buy your comic, whenever we can find it, and would be fascinated to hear from readers whether they would buy it if it were given the greater prominence comics shops can afford.*

In fact, I'd bet a comic shop displaying a high profile football comic in its window would go a long way to bringing in new customers. Comments, anybody? ...Dez

Dealing from the bottom

Richard Domar
9 Highlands Road
Wolverhampton WV3 8AH

FINALLY a comics dealer, Martin Averre, comes clean for us, and basically it's a sad indictment of the comics scene.

In **CI** #175 he says, "Why do you expect to sell it [a comic] back at all?" He goes on, "some items can be sold back and at a profit". How condescending is that? If you pay £10 for a comic you certainly expect to get some of that back, but 10p? That's just taking the piss!

Before I continue I must stress I did not name any specific dealer, and was simply expressing an opinion, yet I must have struck a nerve as Martin responded with such vitriol.

The fact is, Martin makes a good point in all he says but in my opinion there's something wrong somewhere. It would appear that comics collecting is no longer a viable hobby for investment purposes. Some books will increase but only to the advantage of the dealer who can decide the prices for it both to buy and sell.

As such, price guides like **Wizard** and **Overstreet** are of no use to collectors. Nor is a valuation of a collection for insurance purposes. So if comics are no longer collectable, then what are they? Martin tells us they are simply a retail commodity that he makes a living on. Nothing wrong with selling a product to make a living, it's just the manner in which it is being done that has prompted my comments. Martin justifies paying 10p to sell for £2 by saying the profit is needed for wages, rates and so on. Good reasons, but not exactly a recommendation to collect in the first place.

So the question is: hobby or business? Collecting stamps is a hobby but they retain their value most of the time. The truth is that comics are no longer a hobby. It's plain business where dealers dictate from start to finish. They pick from what is offered and reject the rest with numerous excuses, 'I've got loads of that one'; 'it doesn't sell'; 'no-one wants it' or 'he didn't enclose an s.a.e.'. They've really got the best of both worlds.

Martin defends the actions of the distributor and other dealers, which he has to do because it concerns his/their livelihood and puts it nicely, they will all make a profit from selling you comics. That sums up the business. It's all a money-making one which is controlled by them. They decide which books to stock up on. To hype up later with a price to match saying it's scarce or in-demand. But heaven help you if you try to sell it back a few years later.

Must be great to be a dealer, especially if you read the things yourself. However I know that many dealers do not read them.

Maybe that's the whole problem.

Sez Dez, CI #175

K. S. Broadhead
6 Albert St, Thorne, Doncaster DN8 5JN

"By 'eck, tha's brot bac sum reht memrees!" (trs: "My goodness, you have some remarkably good recollections!").

Thanks so much for recalling your youth at Scarborough, Dez. As a child I too spent a lot of time there and often frequented the very shop you mentioned. Many a copy of **Commando** and **Battle Picture Library** were bought from there, along with **Warlord** and **Victor** Summer Specials.

Although I've returned to Scarborough on numerous occasions, I've not visited the Peasholme Park area for a good many years. However, during a recent visit with my fiancee Amanda, we boarded an open top bus and ventured along Marine Drive to the North Bay.

Stepping off at the Corner Cafe, I was suprised how small the cafe was. As a child, its dimensions had always seemed more akin to The Overlook from *The Shining*! Across the road there was the small putting green but the cable car ride to the cliff top had disappeared. Futher along the road was the open air swimming pool, still with its iron turnstile entrances and whitewashed walls. And yes, hiring a rowing boat to go round the Peasholme Park lake, we glimpsed the model warships moored in their miniature harbours – no doubt awaiting the next day's battle.

In today's world of PS2s, Xboxes, terrorist alterts, internet shopping and, ahem, comic slabbing, it's refreshing to find somewhere that hasn't really moved with the times and is still stuck in its own tiny dimension from a more niaive time.

God bless Scarborough!

Mike Kazybrid's COMIC CUTS

Script by Paul Kristian

DEZ
HE'S HOPING TO BUY THE COVER AND ALL THE PAGES SEPARATELY OFF THE INTERNET
SO MIC BUFF'S VERY KINDLY SOLD HIM HIS FIRST PIECE FOR JUST £50 TO GET HIM STARTED!
LOOK - THE TOP STAPLE!

Send your script ideas to the above address and you receive the original art if yours is published.

Please note: All scripts are submitted on the understanding they become the copyright property of Kazybrid, Skinn and Comics International.

Directory

An at-a-glance reference guide to everything that counts in comics

Internet Listings

Comics creators

Jessica Abel ..... www.artbabe.com
Neal Adams ..... www.nealadams.com
Kyle Baker ..... www.kylebaker.com
Leo Baxendale ..... www.reaper.co.uk/main.htm
Brian Bolland Art ..... www.velouria.com/Bolland
Mark Bright ..... www.mdbright.com
Eddie Campbell ..... www.eddiecampbellcomics.com
John Cassaday ..... www.johncassaday.com
Gene Colan ..... www.genecolan.com
Chuck Dixon ..... www.dixonverse.com
Will Eisner ..... www.willeisner.tripod.com
Warren Ellis ..... www.warrenellis.com
Phil Foglio ..... www.studiofoglio.com
Jon Haward ..... www.jonhawardart.com
Jeff Jones ..... www.jeffreyjones.com
Bob Layton ..... www.boblayton.com
Joseph Michael Linsner ..... www.linsner.com
Tom Lyle ..... www.tomlyle.com
Scott McCloud ..... www.scottmcloud.com
Grant Morrison ..... www.grant-morrison.com
Alex Ross Art ..... www.alexrossart.com
Dave Stevens ..... www.davestevens.com
William Stout ..... www.williamstout.com
Bryan Talbot ..... www.bryan-talbot.com
Barry Windsor-Smith .. www.barrywindsor-smith.com
Bernie Wrightson ..... www.berniewrightson.com

Comics publishers

Abstract Studios ..... www.strangersinparadise.com
AC Comics ..... www.accomics.com
Acclaim ..... ww.acclaim.com/comics
AiT/Planet Lar ..... www.astronautsintrouble.com
Antarctic Press ..... www.antarctic-press.com
Archie Comic Publications ... www.archiecomics.com
Caliber Comics ..... www.calibercomics.com
Cartoon Books ..... www.boneville.com
Chaos! ..... www.chaoscomics.com
com.x ..... www.comxcomics.com
CrossGen ..... www.crossgen.com
Crusade Entertainment ..... www.shiweb.com
Dark Horse ..... www.darkhorse.com
DC Comics ..... www.dccomics.com
Drawn and Quarterly ..... www.drawnandquarterly.com
Dynamic Forces ..... www.dynamicforces.com
Fantagraphics ..... www.fantagraphics.com
Harris Comics ..... www.vampirella.com
Heavy Metal ..... www.heavymetal.com
Knockabout Comics ..... www.knockabout.com
Marvel Comics ..... www.marvel.com
Northern Lightz ..... www.northernlightz.com
Oni Press ..... www.onipress.com
Pulp Theatre ..... www.pulptheatre.com
Quality/Warrior ..... www.comicsinternational.com
Sirius Entertainment www.sirius.choiceoneonline.com
Todd McFarlane Productions ..... www.spawn.com
Top Cow Comics ..... www.topcow.com
TwoMorrows ..... www.twomorrows.com
2000 AD www.2000ADonline.com
Viz (USA) ..... www.viz.com
Viz (UK) ..... www.viz.co.uk
WildStorm Comics ..... www.wildstorm.com

Manga and anime

AD Vision ..... www.advfilms.com
MVM ..... www.mvm-uk.co.uk

Downloadable software

PANELSYS
The ultimate panelologist's database system for organising your prized collection! Take a free trial today ..... www.panelsys.com

On-line auctions

COMIC BOOK POSTAL AUCTIONS
Ten successful years specialising in Golden & Silver Age, artwork and vintage UK comics.
..... www.compalcomics.com

eBay ..... www.ebay.co.uk
Heritage Comics Auctions . www.heritagecomics.com

NEAR MINT
The newest truly online auction system, dedicated to the collectible marketplace.
..... www.near-mint.com

Fantasy art and books

THE DRAGONS GALLERY
'Shop online' for original comic art, lithos, manga, fantasy and gothic art.
..... www.thedragonsgallery.co.uk

Festivals and fairs

Amadora Festival (Portugal) ... www.bdamadora.com
Angouleme BD (France) ..... www.bdangouleme.com
Comic-Con International (San Diego, USA)
..... www.comic-con.org
Megacon (Florida, USA) ... www.megaconvention.com
Raptus International Festival (Norway) www.raptus.no
Scottish Comic, Card & Collectables Fair
..... e-mail: marts@redhotcomics.demon.co.uk
Wizard World (Chicago, USA) www.wizarduniverse.com

New and back issue dealers

Ace Comics ..... www.acecomics.net
Avalon Comics ..... www.avaloncomics.co.uk

CHAOS CITY COMICS
Award-winning site. High grade Silver Age items and Dave Gibbons original art
..... www.chaoscitycomics.com

COMIC BIZ
"Britain's favourite comic-book company" Over 250,000 items for sale
..... www.comic-biz.com

Comics 24-7 Limited www.comics24-7.co.uk
Comics & Collectables www.comicsandcollectables.co.uk
Comics Forever ..... www.comicsforever.com

COMIX-SHOP.CO.UK
Hot comics, new imports, fast service, nice prices... Go on – Take a peek.
..... www.comix-shop.co.uk

EPIC HEROES
Comics, toys, DVDS, posters, games, CCG. All available to order online. Next day delivery ..... www.epicheroes.com

GOLDUST COMICS
Fantastic range of Golden, Silver and Bronze Age comics on our easy-to-use website.
..... www.goldustcomics.com

INCOGNITO
Access over 500,000 comics on the UK's fastest and funkiest comics website.
....www.incognitocomics.co.uk

Krypton Komics ..... www.kryptonkomics.com

MEGA-CITY COMICS
Largest graphic novel catalogue in the country – fast and easy online shopping.
..... www.megacitycomics.co.uk

Mighty World of Comicana ..... www.comicana.com

OBSCURE COMICS
For those comics that you can't find anywhere. Cheap too!
..... www.obscurecomics.com

OK Comics ..... www.okcomics.co.uk
Page 45 ..... www.page45.com

QUICKSILVER COMICS
The specialist Silver and Bronze Age site. Over 100,000 items listed, all with cover images ..... www.qscomics.com

SILVER ACRE COMICS
Over 900,000 comics in stock, 110,000 different items listed online.
....www.silveracre.com

Speeding Bullet ..... www.speedingbulletcomics.co.uk

On-line comics companies:

By popular demand, **Comics International** now runs an at-a-glance overview of the major sites for on-line comics collectors and creators. Have your company listed for only £5 (US $8) a month. Bookable in six-issue blocks, companies wishing to be included should send £30 or US $40 (UK: please add £5.25 to cover VAT) with trading name and website address.

♦ Major companies requiring bold and boxed entries should send £60 + £10.50 VAT per six-issue series, US $80 (£10/$16 per issue) and may add three lines of descriptive copy. Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International and sent to:
Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ
Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail details to: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

Retail Index: UK

Key to the abbreviations used:

imp = air imported new issues
back = back issues stocked
gn = graphic novels
tpbk = trade paperbacks
STO = standing order service (new comics reserved)
s-p = small press and fanzines
ind = independent comics
u/g = underground comix
prl = peripherals/supplies
RPG = role playing games
CCG = customisable card games
merch = trading cards, videos, t-shirts, posters, etc

Sorry, no websites, this is a shop guide

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Central London

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5QJ. Mon-Thurs 10-5.45; Fri 10-6.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-3.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 020 7924 3609

Book & Comic Exchange, 14 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Mon-Sun 10-8. Nothing legal refused! (back, ind, u/g) 020 7229 8420

Comic Showcase 63 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0NE. Sun-Wed 10-7; Thurs-Fri 10-8; Sat 9.30-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, cartoon books, original art) 020 7434 4349

Forbidden Planet Megastore, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR. Mon-Sat 10-7 (Thurs til 8); Sun 12-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, sci-fi/fantasy, books, video/DVD, games, mags, toys) 020 7420 3666

Gosh!, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (opposite British Museum). Mon-Sun 10-6 (Thurs-Fri to 7) (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, foreign, largest range newspaper strip compilations in UK) 020 7636 1011

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Sun 10-6 (Thurs-Fri to 7) (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV, fantasy/horror, body art, subculture) 020 7485 9320

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftsbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EH. Mon-Wed 10.30-6.30; Thurs-Sat 10-7; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV/fantasy) 020 7836 5630

Orbital, 9 Old Compton Street, London W1. Mon-Sat 10.30-7; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, manga, toys, Star Wars) 020 7434 9363

Outer London

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, prl, merch, sci-fi, original art) 020 8686 2400

Ashcan Ltd, 3 Eagle Star House, 299-301 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Tues-Wed/Fri 12-5; Thurs 9-6; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 0845 166 2532

Atomic Comics, 1112 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Tues 10.30-5.30; Wed 1-5.30; Thurs-Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, art books, Games Workshop, toys, kits) 020 8597 8547

Calamity Comics, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6, (Thurs-Fri to 7); Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV, books, videos) 020 8427 3831

Epic Heroes, 21/23 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7JE. Mon-Sat 10-6. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, toys, posters, Transformers) 020 8952 7181

Forbidden Planet, 175 North End, Croydon CR0 1TP. Mon-Fri 10-6 (Thurs to 7); Sat 9.30-6. (back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch) 020 8688 7190

Krypton Komics, 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Tues-Wed 11-6; Thurs 10.30-7; Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6 Nearest Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind) 020 8801 5378 fax: 8376 3174

Phoenix Fantasy, 9 Market Street, Margate, Kent CT9 1EU. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch) 01843 224768

They Walk Among US, 26 Red Lion Street, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RW. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 6); Sun 11-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, fantasy/sci-fi/horror, subculture) tel/fax: 020 8948 8476

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, London SW15 1JP. Mon-Wed 10.30-6; Thurs-Fri 10.30-7; Sat 10.30-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, Gold/Silver/Bronze Age specialists, British comics/annuals, books) 020 8788 2052

South East

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch) 01206 561912

The American Comic Shop, 1 Church Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BS (off High Street). Mon-Fri 10-5.30 (Tues until 5); Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, action figures) 01634 817410

MOVED **Calamity Comics**, 162 High Street, Watford WD17 2EG. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Thurs 10-7; Fri 10-6; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 01923 249293

Cartoon Shop, 19 East Square, Basildon, Essex SS14 1HT. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01268 534194

Central City Comics, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, foreign) 01473 233017

Chaos City, 20 Heritage Close, (off High Street), St Albans, Herts AL3 4EB. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri 10-7.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 01727 838719

Comic Showcase, 19-20 St Clements Street, Oxford OX4 1AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01865 723680

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead SL6 1JN. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, tpbk, gn, merch, CCG, toys) 01628 777998

David's Comic Shop, 5 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.45; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g) 01273 691012

Daydream Nation Trading Cards at Hive, 6 Kensington Gardens, Brighton BN1 4AL. Mon-Sat 10-6 (CCGs, cards, sports, Ultra-Pro) 01273 687 877

Forbidden Planet, 60 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, CCG, merch, videos, sci-fi/fantasy books, film/TV magazines) 01223 301666

Forbidden Planet, 44 The Priory Centre, Dartford, Kent DA1 2HS. Mon-Wed 10.30-5.30; Thurs-Sat 10-5.30 (back, gn, ind, PRG, CCG, merch) 01322 224837

Incognito Comic Shop, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film/TV) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton LU1 2TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, STO, s-p, CCG, merch, Star Trek/Wars, sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Planet Ace, 324-325 Chartwell North, Top Floor, Victoria Plaza, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5SR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 01702 613021

Steve's Comics, The Bookstall, Beckenham Junction Station, Rectory Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1HY. Mon-Fri 6-7; Sat 7-5 (back – Marvel, DC – ind, British comics, tpbk) 07977 751442

Slough Computers, 50 Village Shopping Centre, Slough, Berks SL1 1HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, STO, ind, cards, second hand video games) 01753 521594

Time Trek, 46 High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1EG. Mon-Wed/Fri 9.30-5.30; Thurs 10-8; Sat 10-5.30; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, CCG, prl, sf TV/film) 020 8313 0677

Whatever Comics, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, kits) 01227 453226

Whatever Comics, 5 Middle Row, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, model kits) 01622 681041

Midlands

Abstract Sprocket, 29 St Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01603 624410

NEW **Close Encounters**, 59 Midland Road, Bedford MK10 1PW. Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat 9-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, gn, merch, video, DVDs, action figures, t-shirts, trading cards) 01234 270777

Comic Culture, The Mall, 257-259 High Street, Lincoln LN2 1HX. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl) 01522 546611

Forbidden Planet, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (Thurs to 7) (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV) 02476 229672

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 129 Middle Walk, Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham NG1 7LN. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 0115 958 4706

Forbidden Planet Superstore, 38 Priory Queensway, Birmingham B4 7LA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs-Fri to 6) (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, books, games, mags, kits, toys, videos) 0121 236 3026

FPI Derby, 42/43 Main Centre (opposite Wilkinsons) Derby. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, merch, rock/film/TV memorabilia, video games) 01332 206606

FPI Hanley, 52 Stafford Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1JB. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01782 279294 fax: 202381

FPI Leicester, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 01162 515266

FPI Nottingham, 11 Market Street, Nottingham. Mon-Fri 9-5.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, foreign, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 0115 9484122

FPI Wolverhampton, 23 Victoria Street, Wolverhampton WV1 3NP. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 12-4 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, rock memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01902 717440

Ground Zero, 9 Toothill Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 1NJ. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, prl, CCG, merch, toys) 01623 622017

Nostalgia & Comics (FPI), 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon-Thurs 9.15-5.45; Fri-Sat 9.15-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0121 643 0143

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, manga) 0115 950 8045

Phoenix Comix, 29 Abington Square, Northampton NN1 4AE. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, RPG, CCG, action figures) 01604 602311

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 6 East Street, Derby DE1. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, fantasy books, film/TV) 0115 950 9231

Travelling Man, c/o Gamestation, 1st Floor, 16 Angel Row, Nottingham NG1 6HL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures, miniatures) 0115 950 9231

North West

All-American, 102 Newport Street, Bolton BL3 6AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, Star Wars, WWF, action figures, S/Age, videos, records, CDs) 01204 366553

Alpha Omega Comics, 33-35 Library Street, Wigan, Lancs WN1 1NN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, merch, videos) 07796 854644

Batcave, 39 Penny Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 6HQ. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, RPG, CCG, merch) 01254 667488

Forbidden Planet, 92 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 7) (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV, sci-fi horror) 0151 707 1491

Forbidden Planet Megastore (FPI), 65 Oldham Street, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1JR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (2 floors; imp, back, STO, RPG, CCG, merch, books, toys, film and TV tie-ins, manga) 0161 839 4777

Imagination Station, 41 Bank Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8HJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch)

Millennium Comics, 4 Church Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NT. Mon-Tues 10-5; Thurs-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01606 49255

Thunderbooks, 332 Lytham Road, Blackpool, Lancashire FY4 1DW. Mon/Tues/Thurs-Sat (Sundays in June-Oct only) 10-5.30; Wed 1-3.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, media collectors' items) 01253 348321 fax: 407813

Thunderbooks II, 116 Friargate, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, RPG, merch) 01772 204287

Time Tunnel, 13 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 2BS. Mon and Wed-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, merch, film/TV memorabilia, action figures, videos, model kits) 01270 215496

Worlds Apart (FPI), 58-60 Lime Street (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch, film) 0151 707 0839

North East

Books 'N' Comics, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, fantasy and film magazines, Doctor Who/Star Trek) 01642 249143

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 30 Eastgate, The Headrow, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, film/TV mags, posters, toys, kits, trading cards, stills, Star Trek/Doctor Who) 01132 426325

Forbidden Planet, 59 Grainger Street, Newcastle NE1 5JE. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, fantasy/sci-fi books, videos) 0191 261 9173

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 41 Dundas Street, Middlesbrough TS1 1HR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs until 7) (imp, gn, s-p, STO, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch, video, action figures, film/TV, manga) 01642 248889

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Matilda, off the Moor, Sheffield. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 9.30- 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, model kits, sci-fi/fantasy books, horror magazines, newspaper strip books) 0114 276 9475

The Last Picture Show, 38-39 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thurs 10-8; Fri 10-9; Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, film/TV and rock memorabilia) 0114 256 9604 fax: 255 3399

Millennium Comics, Stall 141, Warrington Indoor Market. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, RPG, merch, action figures, toys) 01925 575657

Off-World Comics, 200 Park View, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3QP. Mon-Tues/Thurs 10-5.30 (closed Wed); Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch) 0191 251 2288

NEW **OK Comics**, 19 Thorntons Arcade, Briggate. Leeds LS1 6LQ. (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl) 01132 469366

Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield. Mon-Sat 10-5 (Wed closed) (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, merch, Star Trek specialists) 0114 275 8905

Travelling Man, Unit 8/9, The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 0113 242 7227

Travelling Man, 54 Goodramgate, York YO1 2LF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch, action figures) 01904 628787

NEW **2Tone Comics**, 40 Market Street, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 6AA. Sat-Sun 10.30-5.30

(imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, merch, CGC) 01422 845666

West Country

American Dream Comics, 72 Walcot Street, Bath BA1 5BD. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, original art, hobby kits, CDs) 01225 424881

NEW **American Graffiti**, 78 Church Lane, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 1BH. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01271 325740

Area 51, 143 Gloucester Road, Bristol. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, merch, original art) 0117 924 4655

Automattic Comics, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Rd, Corsham SN13 9BQ. Mon-Tues 12-5; Thurs-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 01249 701647

Collector's Choice, 45 Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1TX. Mon-Sat 9-5 (S/Age, British comics/annuals, vintage mags, toys, memorabilia) 01452 410232

Fantasyland Comics, Unit 4, The Colwell Centre, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8NJ. Mon-Fri 11-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, merch)

Forbidden Planet, 30 Penn Street, Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 7); Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV mags, subculture) 0117 929 8692

Forbidden Planet, 43-45 East Street, Southampton SO14 3HN. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30 (Thurs to 6); Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch, film/TV) 023 80230991 fax: 230996

Ian's Books & Comics, 195a Albert Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO4 0JP (next to Tesco). Mon-Tues/Thurs-Fri 10.30-5.15 (Wed closed); Sat 10-5.15 (imp, back, tpbk, STO, s-p, prl, toys) 023 92422731

Into the Void, 11 Rodbourne Road, Swindon SN2 2AG. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, STO, CCG, merch) 01793 434363

Kaboom, 65 High Street, Totnes, Devon TQ10 9PU. (new, back, action figures, t-shirts, board games, RPG, import video games, mail order) 01803 863049

Kathies Comics, Unit BG29, Broadmead Gallery, The Galleries Shopping Centre, Bristol BS1 3XB. Mon-Wed/Fri-Sat 9-5.30; Thurs 9-6; Sun 11-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0117 922 1170

Kathies Comics, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 01752 257800

Paradox Comics, 17 High Street, Poole, Dorset BH15 1AB. Mon-Fri 10.30-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, ind, merch, videos) 01202 661346

Wonderworld, 540 Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, CCG, merch, film/TV/media, beanie babies) 01202 394918

Wales

Cardiff's Comic Guru Presents!, 20-22 Wyndham Arcade, Cardiff CF10 1FJ. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 'til 9) (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 029 202 29119

Cardiff Fantasy Centre, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sat 9.30-4.30 (imp, back, STO; established over 20 years) 029 206 58184 (eves)

Comix Shoppe, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, RPG, CCG, merch, anime, Games Workshop) 01792 642097

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5 Duke St, Cardiff. Mon-Wed 10-5.30 (Thurs til 6.30), Fri 10-5.30, Sat 10-6 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch, sci-fi fantasy/horror books, Star Trek/Wars) 029 202 28885

Negative Zone, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, gn, STO, s-p, ind; established for 12 years) 01633 222159

Scotland

Asylum Books & Games, 29 Adelphi, Aberdeen AB11 5B2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Mon/Thurs to 8); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, new/second hand RPG, CCG, books, original art) 01224 574637

Black Hole Comic Shop, Unit 3, 5 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1ER. Mon-Thurs 10-5; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, second hand records, CDs, videos) 01382 221037

City Centre Comics, 51 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5LU. Tues-Sat 10-5 (back) 0141 552 2208

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 12 Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1JX. Mon-Fri 10-6 (Thurs until 7); Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, gn, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, CCG, merch) 01224 622131

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 40-41 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1LL. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-6.30; Fri-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5. (imp, STO, s-p, ind, merch, foreign) 0131 558 8226

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 168 Buchanan St, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, merch) 0141 331 1215

Justice Comics, Unit 36, The Arcade, Stirling FK8 1AX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, STO, ind, merch) 01786 447687

Kapow!, 28 Allison Street, Govanhill, Glasgow G42 8NN (off Pollokshaws Rd). Tues-Sat 11-6 (buy and sell back, gn, ind, mags, videos, DVDs, new and second-hand books, merch) 0141 4241600

Plan 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB25 1NE. Mon-Sat 10-5 (Thurs to 6); Sun 1-4. (imp, back, STO, ind, RPG, CCG, WWF, merch, sci-fi) t/f: 01224 624467

Red Hot Comics, Block D Unit 7, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH. Mon-Sat 11.30-5.30; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, CCG, merch) 0141 630 0049

Northern Ireland

Crosshatch, Unit 8, Smithfield Market, Belfast BT1 1JD. Mon-Fri 10-5; Sat 10-5.30 (original art, prints, autographs, cover recreations) 07739 871415

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 52-54 Ann Street, Belfast BT1 4EG Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, ind, u/g, merch) 028 90438744

Planet Ace Derry, 33 Shipquat St, Derry, Londonderry BT48 6DF. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) 02871 369787

Retail Index: USA

When telephoning from outside the USA, include the bracketed 00. Out-of-town US calls begin with the 1 prefix only. The following is a fraction of the estimated 3,000+ US comics stores.

Alabama

Optic Nerve, 1930 12th Avenue South, Birmingham, AL 35205 (film, newsstand, ind) (00)1 205 933 2787

Alaska

Bosco's in Spenard, 2606 Spenard Road, Anchorage 99503. Mon-Sat 11-8, Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, merch) (00) 1 907 274 4112

Bosco's Diamond Centre, 800 East Diamond Boulevard, Anchorage 99577. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, games, Star Wars/Trek) (00) 1 907 344 3963

Bosco's in Eagle River, 11432 Business Boulevard, Eagle River. Mon-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, merch) (00) 1 907 696 5166

Arizona

Lost Dutchman, 747 West Camelback Road, Phoenix, AZ 85013. Mon-Sun 10-7. (new, back) (00)1 619 278 0371

California

Comickaze, 5525 Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 62117-2342. Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat 11-6; Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 858 278 0371

Comix Experience, 305 Divisadero Street, San Francisco, CA 94117. Mon-Sat 11-7; Sun 12-5 (new, back) (00)1 415 863 9258

Flying Colors Comics, 2980 Treat Blvd, Concord, CA 94518. Mon-Sat 11-7 (Fri until 8); Sun 12-6 (new, back, ind, cards, merch) (00)1 510 825 5410

Lee's Comics, Inc., 1020-F N Rengstorff Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043. Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, s-p, adult, merch) (00)1 650 965 1800

Lee's Comics, Inc., 2222 South El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403. Mon-Sun 10-9, (new, back: 1930s to date, anime, manga, adult, s-p, merch) (00)1 650 571 1489

Meltdown Comics & Collectibles, 7522 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046 (toys, comics, books) (00)1 323 851 7223

Stand-Up Comics, 10020 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Mon-Fri 11 7; Sat-Sun 11-6 (new, back, cards, anime, CCG, merch) (00)1 510 525 3344

Third Planet, 3822 Sepulveda Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90505. Sun-Thurs 11-8; Fri + Sat 11-9 (new, ind, back, CCG, RPG, GW, sci-fi/fantasy, anime, merch) (00)1 310 791 6227

Hawaii

Gecko Books & Comics, 3613 Waialae Avenue, Honolulu, 96816. Mon-Sun 9-9 (new, back, cards, toys, merch) (00)1 808 732 1292

Illinois

Comic Kingdom, 5941 W Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634. (new, back) (00)1 773 545 2231

Louisiana

Comic Cosmos, 343 W Esplanade Avenue, Kenner, LA 70065. Mon-Thur 11.30-7, Fri-Sat 11-7.30, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, toys, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

Crescent City Comics & Cards, 6111 Elysian Fields, New Orleans, LA 70122. Mon-Sat 11-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

More Fun Comics, 8200 Oak Street, New Orleans, LA 70118. Tues-Sat 11-7, Sun-Mon 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, merch, toys, CDs) (00)1 504 865 1800

Maine

Casablanca Comics, 151 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04101. Mon-Sat 10-9, Sun 12-7 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, art) (00)1 207 780 1676

Casablanca Comics, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Windham, ME 04062. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, merch)(00)1 207 892 0056

Massachusetts

Comicopia, 464 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02215. Mon-Sun 11-7 (Wed 10-8) (new, merch, CCG, manga, tpbk)(00)1 617 266 4266

Minnesota

Uncle Sven's Comic Shoppe, 1838 St Clair Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55105. Mon-Fri 3-6, Sat 11-4 (new, back, tpbk, gn, videos, action figures, CCG, RPG; est 19 years) (00)1 651 699 3409

New York State

Earthworld Comics, 327 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. Mon-Wed 11-6; Thur-Fri 11-7, Sat 11-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, ind, manga/anime, cards, merch) (00)1 518 465 5495

Forbidden Planet (FPI associate), 840 Broadway (at 13th St, NY 10003. Mon-Sat 10-10; Sun 12-10. (new, ind, back, RPG, merch, fantasy) (00)1 212 473 1576

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 4 West 33rd Street (opposite Empire State Building), NY 10001. Mon-Sat 9am-11pm; Sun 10-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 212 268 7088

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 325 New Dorp Lane, Staten Island, NY 10306. Mon-Sun; 12-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 718 351 6299

Midtown Comics, 200 West 40th Street, NY 10018 (00)1 212 302-8192

Ohio

The Laughing Ogre, 4258 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Mon-Sat 10-9; Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 614 267 6473

Oklahoma

Time Warp, 588 SE Washington Street, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (new, back, cards, games, toys, CDs, sci-fi/fantasy) (00)1 918 335 3373

Pennsylvania

Comic Castle, 17 West Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA 17703 Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back) (00)1 717 322 8763

Golden Eagle, Berkshire Square, 1159 Berkshire Boulevard, Wyoming, PA 19610 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 376 8255

Golden Eagle, Fairgrounds Square Mall, Reading, PA 19605 (new, back, games, CCG, cards, Star Wars/Trek) (00)1 610 921 3160

Tennessee

Collector's World, 1511 E Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37130. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, Hickory Plaza South Central, 5751 Nolensville Road, Nashville, TN 37211. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, 10820 Kingston Park #10, Knoxville, TN 37922 Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 423 675 6830

Collector's World, 4006 Granny White Park, Nashville, TN 37204 (new, back, CCG, merch)(00)1 615 385 8136

Texas

Cliff's Comics, 2205 West Berry Street, Fort Worth, TX 76110. (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 817 927 7172

Collectible Heroes, 502 West Calton Road #307, Laredo, TX 78041. Mon-Wed 2-7.30; Thurs-Sat 11.30-7.30 (new, back, cards, merch) (00)1 956 791 8428

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 616 West 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705 (new, back, games, anime, miniatures, prl) (00)1 512 454 2399

Virginia

Thore Comics, 3514 Oaklawn Boulevard, Hopewell, VA 23860. Mon-Sat 11-7, (new, back, Silver Age, sci-fi, M:TG, cards, vinyl)(00)1 804 458 9561

Trilogy Shop, 700 E Little Creek Road, Norfolk, VA 23518. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, merch) (00)1 757 587 2540

Wisconsin

Lost World of Wonders, 6713 West Oklahoma Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53219 (00)1 414 328 4651

Direct Market Retailers:

Comics International's Retail Index is THE international retail reference source for collectors, creators, publishers and journalists. Through it you can reach over 40,000 dedicated readers each issue for only £6 (US $10) a month! Bookable in six-issue blocks, retailers wishing to be included should send US $60 or £36 (UK: please add £6.30 to cover VAT @ 17.5%) plus shop information as detailed on previous page to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after various entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Retailers: International

Australia

Arcadia Unbound, 267 Forest Road, Hurstville, NSW 2220. Mon-Fri 10.30-7, Sat 10-4, Sun 12-3 (imp, back, manga, merch, CCG) (0061) 2 9585 1489

Books & Bounties/Comics Haven, 157a Charters Towers Road, Townsville, Queensland 4812. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG, CCG) (0061) 7 4779 2408

Fan Attic, 1st Floor, 91 Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, Queensland 4002. Mon-Sun 9.30-5.30 (toys, Star Wars, sci-fi collectibles) (0061) 7 3221 1420

Kinda Lotsa Comics and Stuff, Shop 4, 503-511 King Street, Newtown, Sydney, NSW. Mon-Sat 10.30-7.30 (back, toys, merch)(0061) 2 9565 1054

Known Space Books, 1st Floor, 108 Gawler Place, Adelaide, SA 5000. Wed-Sat 12-6 (US/UK back) (0061) 8 8223 4304

Phantom Zone, 23 Anderson Street, Chatswood, NSW 2067. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9411 3709

Phantom Zone, 198 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW 2250. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 43 25 4599

Phantom Zone, 207 George Street, Liverpool, NSW. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9601 2622

Phantom Zone, 285 Hunter Street, Newcastle, NSW. 2300. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4929 5717

Phantom Zone, 101a Argyle Street, Parramatta, NSW 2150 Mon-Fri 9-6; Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp. back, books, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 9891 1848

Phantom Zone, 268 Crown Street, Wollongong, NSW. 2500. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, gn, merch, RPG) (0061) 2 4228 7393

Austria

Comic Treff, Getreidemarkt 2-4, 1010 Vienna. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 10-1 (imp, back, gn, CCG) (0043) 11 586 76 27

Belgium

Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels. (3 floors; imp, back, merch, US/French, STO, toys) (0032 2) 534 63 67 (fax 538 24 52)

Canada

Connection MD, 1539 Van Horne Avenue, Montreal. Quebec H2V 1L4. Mon-Sat 11-6 (new, merch, back, CCG) (00)1 514 948 2627

Dragon Lady Comics & Paper Nostalgia, 609 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1B5. (00)1 416 536 7460

Little Shop of Heroes, 160 Wallace Avenue, South Listowel, Ontario N4W 1X9 (00)1 519 291 2281

Silver Snail Comic Shop, 367 Queen Street West, Toronto M5V 2A4. Mon-Wed 10-6; Thurs-Fri 11-8; Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (00)1 416 593 0889

France

Album, 67 boulevard St Germain, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 53 10 00 60

Album, 6 rue Dante, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 43 54 67 09

Alpha Omega, 25 rue de la Clef, 59800 Lille. Mon 2.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 10.30-12.30/2.30-7.30 (imp, back, French, merch, trading/gaming cards, toys, RPG, Wars/Trek, B5, L5R) (0033) 320 319 375

Astro City, 22 rue Masurel, 59800 Lille. Mon 3-7.30; Tue-Sat 10-12.30, 2-7.30 (imp, manga, cards, merch, kits) (0033) 320 55 1010

Impact Comics, 64 rue Condorcet, 75009 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, merch, CCG)(0033) 42 80 30 10

L'Antre des Dragons, 56 rue de Loup, 33000 Bordeaux. Mon-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0033) 55 65 17378

Les Nageurs de Sable, 14 rue Courteline, 37058 Tours. Mon-Sat 11-1/2-7 (imp, back. cards, merch) (0033) 2 47 39 52 40

Pulps, 14 bld Morland, 75004 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, RPG) (0033) 1 42 72 55 25

Germany

Black Dog Comics, Rodenberg Strasse 9, 10439 Berlin. Mon-Fri 11-6.30, Sat 11-2 (imp, back, gn, t/cards) (0049) 30 4473 6486

Grober Unfug, Zossenerstrasse 32-33, 10961 Berlin. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0049) 30 6940 1490

Greece

Metropolis Comics, 94 Metropoleos St, 54622 Thessaloniki. Mon-Sat 10.30-3.30/7.30-11.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0030) 3 193 7775

Solaris, 6 Botasi Str, 10682, Athens. Mon-Sat 9-3.30/5-8.30 (imp, back, gn, merch) (0030) 1 384 1065

Holland

Henk Lie's Comics & Manga Store, Zeeduk 104, 1012BB Amsterdam. Mon-Sat 11-6; Sun 11-9 (imp, cards, merch, CCG) (0031) 20 421 3688

Hungary

Troll Kepregenyta'r, Terez Krt 13, Budapest 1067. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1(imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0036) 1 322 6026

Irish Republic

Forbidden Planet (FPI), 5-6 Crompton Quay, Dublin 2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 10-7); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, u/g, UK, gn, STO) (0035) 3167 10688

Sub-City Comics, 2 Exchequer Street, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3167 71902

Sub-City Comics, Unit 10, Level 1, Corbettcourt Centre, Eyre Square, Galway. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, u/g, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3915 65994

The 3rd Place, Crow Street, Temple Bar, Dublin 2. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, STO, s-p, ind, prl, RPG, CCG, merch) (0035) 3163 36965

Italy

Avalon, via Battisti 9/b, Bologna. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 051 234459

Avalon, via Pedriali 21, Forli. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 0543 33523

Avalon, via Settembrini 20, Milan. Mon 3.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 022 9400410

Avalon, via Foscolo 3, Padova. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7. (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch)(0039) 049 658290

Avalon, via Bissolati 68, Rome. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (imp, back, gn, CCG, cards, merch)

Avalon, via Magenta 0, Torino. Mon 3.30-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1, 2-7.30 (imp, back, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0039) 011 5617252

Forbidden Planet, via Pinerolo 11/15, 00182 Rome (imp, back, gn) (0039) 06 70305702

Il Marchio Giallo, via Deghi Scipioni 116, Rome. Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (imp, back, merch, kits) (0039) 06 361 40 60

La Borsa del Fumetto, via Lecco 16, 20124 Milano. (imp, back, European and RPG, CCG) (0039) 11 5617252

Malaysia

The Mind Shop, Starhill Centre, Jalang Bukit Bintag, Kuala Lumpur. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 241 8871

The Mind Shop, S 58 Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 719 8246

The Mind Shop, Jin SS21/39, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (imp, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 717 6602

New Zealand

Heroes For Sale, Level 2, 62 Queen St, Auckland. Mon-Sat 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g)(0064) 9 307 0682

Whitcoulls Corner Branch, 210 Queen Street, Private Bag 92098, Auckland. (imp, back, gn, tpbk, s-p, merch, ind, u/g) (0064) 9 356 5400 (fax: 9 356 5408)

Portugal

BdMania, Rua das Flores 67-71 R/C, 1200 Lisboa. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, CCG, merch) (00351) 21 346 1207

Interzona, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Loja 203, Rua Luis Veaga Lertao 98-120, 6050 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

Mundo Fantasma, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Rua Luis Veiga Leitao, 98/120, 1 Andar-Loja 203, 4050-399 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (US imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (00351) 22 609 1460

South Africa

Euroniag, Shop 79A, East Rand Mall, Boksburg, Johannesburg. Mon-Sun 9-10 (imp, back, gn, CCG, merch) (0027) 11 896 3773

Zed Bree's Comic Universe, Mediterr-anean Building, 24 Tenth Ave, Edenvale 1610 Gauteng. 9.30-6 (imp, merch, gn, CCG) 002711 453 4215 (fax 453 4459)

Spain

Gigamesh, RDA San Pedro 53, 08010 Barcelona. Mon-Sat 10-1.30/4.30-8 (imp, gn, RPG, CCG, merch) (0034) 3 246 6359

Sweden

Comics Heaven, Stora Nygatan 23, 11127 Stockholm. Mon-Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, gn, merch)(0046) 8 202516

Switzerland

Analph Comicladen Strassburgstr, 10 PO Box 1030, 8004 Zürich. (0041) 1 2419695 fax 1 2403442

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicate that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

International Festivals

A listing of the world's major comics festivals and conventions. For further information, call the organisers on the phone, fax or e-mail numbers provided. To view updates, contact them on their websites. Organisers' estimates of their previous year's attendance is given in brackets.

September 3-6: United States

DRAGON*CON 2004, Atlanta, Georgia. Organisers: Dragon*Con, PO Box 16459, Atlanta, GA 30321-9998. 001 770 909 0115. www.dragoncon.org

September 9-11: Norway

RAPTUS INTERNATIONAL COMICS FESTIVAL. Organisers: Raptus Bergen Comics Festival, PO Box 768, Central 5807 Bergen, Norway. 0047 55 32 88 55. www.raptus.no

September 11-12: United States

BALTIMORE COMIC-CON, The Baltimore Convention Centre, One West Pratt Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201. 001 410 526 7410. www.comicon.com/baltimore

October 9-10: Belgium

FACTS 2004, ICC Citadelpark, 9000 Gent. Organisers: Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels, Belgium. 0032 2 534 63 67. www.facts-convention.com

October 15-17: Poland

THE 15TH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF COMICS. Organisers: Lodzki Dom Kultury, Traugutta 18, 90-113 Lodz, Poland. 004842 633 98 00. festiwal@ldk.lodz.pl

October 16-17: England

LONDON EXPO, ExCel Convention Centre, Royal Victoria Dock, London. Organisers: London Expo (EW), PO Box 38727, London E10 7YH. 020 8523 1074. www.londonexpo.com

October 22-24: England

LONDON COMIC FESTIVAL, Holiday Inn, Bloomsbury. Organisers: Comic Festival, PO Box 48, Clevedon, Bristol BS21 7LQ. www.comicfestival.co.uk

November 5-7: England

COMIC EXPO, Ramada Hotel, Bristol. Organisers: Area 51 & Comics International. E-mail: comicexpo@fsmail.net. www.komixworld.com

November 13-14: Scotland

MEMORABILIA '04, The SECC, Glasgow. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. 01683 220787. www.memorabilia.co.uk

November 27-28: England

MEMORABILIA '04, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. 01683 220787. www.memorabilia.co.uk

January 27-30: France

ANGOULEME BD. Organisers: Festival International de la Bande Dessinee, 2 Place d l'Hotel de Ville, 16000 Angouleme, France. 0033 05 45 97 86 50. E-mail: b.monchart@labd.com. www.bdangouleme.com

February 25-27: United States

MEGACON 2005, Orange County Convention Centre, Orlando, Florida. Organisers MegaCon, PO Box 1097, Safety Harbor, FL 34695, USA. 001 727 796 5725. www.megaconvention.com

April: England

MEMORABILIA '05, NEC, Birmingham. Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. 01683 220787. www.memorabilia.co.uk Date: TBA

May: Spain

THE 22ND BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL COMIC FESTIVAL. (2003 est: 85,000). Organisers: Ficomic, Palau, 4 Baixos, 08002 Barcelona, Spain. 0034 93 301 23 69. www.ficomic.com Date: TBA

Comics Publishers

North America

Unlike Europe, North American publishers invariably favour indie status to that of being labelled small press. This results in there being hundreds of comics publishers.

While circulations vary immensely, the following are the continent's major comicbook producers with titles printing between 5,000 and 150,000 copies. Contact telephone numbers are given where readily available. Website details can be found on the first page of the directory section.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, PO Box 1674 Station C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2 (Cerebus)

ABSTRACT STUDIOS, PO Box 271487, Houston, TX 77277-1487 (Strangers in Paradise)

AC COMICS, PO Box 521216, Longwood, FL 32752-1216 (adventure titles, Golden Age superhero and western reprints)

ACCLAIM COMICS, 1 Acclaim Plaza, Glen Cove, NY 11542 (game tie-in adventure, Valiant superhero imprint. dormant) (00)1 516 656 5000

AiT/PLANET LAR, 2034 47th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116 (graphic novels) (00)1 415 504 7516

ALTERNATIVE COMICS, 503 North West 37th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32609-2204 (alternative titles and graphic novels) (00)1 352 373 6336

AMERICAN MEDIA CONSUMER ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 600 East Coast Avenue, Lantana, Florida 33464 (Cracked) (00)1 561 586 1111

ANTARCTIC PRESS, 7272 Wurzbach Parkway , Suite 204, San Antonio, Texas TX 78240 (adventure and US manga titles)

ARCHIE COMIC PUBLICATIONS, 325 Fayette Avenue, Mamaroneck, NY 10543 (humour titles) (00)1 914 381 5155

AVATAR PRESS, 9 Triumph Drive, Urbana, IL 61802 (horror and fantasy titles) (00)1 217 384 2216

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT, 9744 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 402, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, CA 90212 (adventure titles; dormant)

BONGO ENTERTAINMENT, 1440 South Sepulveda Boulevard, 3rd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (The Simpsons and Futurama and related humour titles) (00)1 310 966 6168

CALIBER COMICS, 225 North Sheldon Road, Plymouth, MI 48170 (black and white adventure titles) (00)1 734 462 0457

CARTOON BOOKS, PO Box 16973, Columbus, OH43216 (Bone and related titles)

CROSSGEN ENTERTAINMENT, INC, 4023 Tampa Road, Suite 2400, Oldsmar, FL 34677 (fantasy and adventure titles) (00)1 813 891 1702

CRUSADE FINE ARTS LTD, PO Box 845, Bayport, NY 11705 (fantasy and adventure) (00)1 631 472 2866

DARK HORSE COMICS, 10956 South East Main Street, Milwaukie, OR 97222 (adventure, licensed, US and Japanese manga) (00)1 503 652 8815

DC COMICS, 1700 Broadway, NY 10019 (adventure and humour titles, MAD, Vertigo and Paradox Press imprints) (00)1 212 636 5400

DRAWN & QUARTERLY, PO Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, H2V 4SB, Canada (black and white biog)

DREAMWAVE PRODUCTIONS, 11 Allstate Parkway, Suite 200, Markham, Ontario L3R 9T8, Canada (adventure titles)

DYNAMIC FORCES, 155 Ninth Avenue, Suite E, Runnemede, NJ 08078 (variant editions and limited edition merchandise) (00)1 856 312 1040

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS, 7563 Lake City Way North East, Seattle, Washington 98115 (adventure, biographical and Eros adult titles) (00)1 206 524 1967

HARRIS COMICS, 1115 Broadway, 8th Floor, NY 10010 (Vampirella, fantasy and horror titles) (00)1 212 807 7100

HEAVY METAL, 100 North Village Road, Suite 12, Rockville Center, NY 11570 (adult fantasy magazines and spin-off editions)

HUMANOIDS PUBLISHING, PO Box 931658, Hollywood, California CA 90093 (US-European editions)

IMAGE COMICS, 1071 North Batavia Street, Suite A, Orange, CA 92867 (adventure titles) (00)1 714 2880200

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, 10th Floor, East 40th Street, New York, NY 10016 (adventure, humour and licensed titles) (00)1 212 5764000

NBM PUBLICATIONS, 185 Madison Avenue, Suite 1504, New York, NY 10016 (adult fantasy graphic novels and magazines)

ONI PRESS, 6336 South East Milwaukie Avenue, PMB 30, Portland, OR 97202 (adventure titles)

RADIO COMIX, 11765 West Avenue, PMB #117, San Antonio, TX 78216 (anthropomorphic manga) (00)1 210 3487195

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT, INC, PO Box 834, Stanhope, NJ 07802 (adult titles)

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS PUBLISHING, 577 South Market Street, San Jose, CA 95113 (black and white fantasy titles) (00)1 9718929

TOP SHELF PRODUCTIONS, PO Box 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282 (alternative and biographical titles) (00)1 770 4276395

TWOMORROWS PUBLISHING, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614 (comics feature and history magazines and books) tel: (00)1 919 449 0344 fax: (00) 1 919 449 0327

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS, PO Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107 (English translated manga titles)

WaRP GRAPHICS, 2600 South Road, Suite 44/242, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (Elfquest and spin-off titles)

United Kingdom

The following are major UK comics and graphic novel publishers. If calling from outside of the UK, you should drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe and Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

AP COMICS, Suite 3, 7 French Row, St Albans, Herts AL3 5DU (adventure titles)

COM.X, The Dickens Inn, Kirk Street, London WC1N 2DG (adventure titles) 020 7831 7777

DC THOMSON, 2 Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals)

DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD (humour and adventure titles, pocket books and annuals) 020 7907 6000

EGMONT MAGAZINES LTD, 25-31 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SU (humour, licensed and pre-school titles) 020 7344 6400

HAMLYN BOOKS, 2-4 Heron Quays, London E14 4JB (graphic novels) 020 7531 8400

JOHN BROWN CITRUS PUBLISHING, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR (albums) 020 7565 3000

KNOCKABOUT COMICS, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (humour titles and underground comix and graphic novels)

NEW 020 8969 2945

PANINI COMICS (UK), Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5UJ (humour and adventure comics, Marvel licensed titles) 01892 500100

PULP THEATRE ENTERTAINMENT, Mermaid Court, 1 Mermaid House, London Bridge, London SE1 1HR (adventure titles) 020 7403 0378

REBELLION DEVELOPMENTS LTD, The Studio, Brewer Street, Oxford OX1 1QN (Judge Dredd The Megazine and 2000 AD) 01865 792201

THE REDAN COMPANY, Canon Court East, Abbey Lawn, Shrewsbury SY2 5DE (pre-school humour and licenced titles) 01743 364433

SAVOY BOOKS, 446 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3BW (adult comics magazines, books and graphic novels) 0161 445 5771

TITAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP LTD, Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (licensed graphic novels, books, magazines and comics) 020 7620 0200

France

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0033 becomes 011 33

ALBIN MICHEL, 22 rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris (albums) (0033) 1 42 79 10 00

CASTERMAN, 36 rue du Chemin Vert, 75011, Paris (albums and manga titles)

DARGAUD, 15-27 rue Moussorgski, 75018 Paris (albums and manga titles) tel: (0033) 1 53 26 32 32 fax: (0033) 1 53 26 32 00

DELCOURT, 54 rue d'Hauteville, 75010 Paris (albums and comics) tel: (0033) 1 56 03 92 20 fax: (0033) 1 56 03 92 30

FLUIDE GLACIAL, 33 avenue du Main, BP 187, 75755 Paris (comics and albums) (0033) 1 43 20 23 96

GLENAT, 31-33 rue Ernest Renan, 92130 Issy-Les-Moulineaux (albums and manga titles) tel: (0033) 1 41 46 11 41 fax: (0033) 1 41 46 11 13

J'AI LU, 84 rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris (licenced Japanese manga titles) (0033) 1 44 39 34 70

LES HUMANOIDES ASSOCIES, 5 Passage Piver, 75011 Paris (albums) tel: (0033) 1 49 29 88 88 fax: (0033) 1 49 29 88 89

SEMIC FRANCE, 44316 Nantes Cedex 03 (licenced comics and albums) (0033) 2 51 86 14 14

Italy

The following are the country's major comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0039 becomes 011 39

SERGIO BONELLI EDITORE, via Buonarroti 38, 20145 Milano (black and white comics)

CULT COMICS, viale Emilio Po' 380, 41100 Modena (Image and Dark Horse licensed titles)

MAGIC PRESS, Zona industriale via Ragusa 18, 00040 Pavona, Roma (Vertigo and WildStorm licensed titles) (0039) 06 93020361

STAR COMICS, strada Selvette 1bis/1 Bosco (PG) (comics and black and white manga titles)

ASTORINA S.R.I., via Boccaccio 32, 20123 Milano (Diabolik original and reprint black and white)

KING COMICS, via Pinerolo 3, 00182 Roma (comics)

Spain

The following are the country's comics and album publishers. If phoning from the USA, the country code of 0034 becomes 011 34

NORMA EDITORAL, Fluvià 89, 08019 Barcelona (licensed DC and Dark Horse comics and albums) 0034 93 303 68 20

EDITORIAL PLANETA-DE AGOSTINI, SA, Aribau 185, 08021 Barcelona (licensed Dark Horse comics and albums)

TOUTAIN EDITOR, SA, Diagonal 325, E-08009 Barcelona (licensed Marvel, Dark Horse, Chaos!, Image and manga comics and albums) 0034 93 344 06 00

EDICIONES LA CÚPULA, Plaza de las Beatas 3, E-08003 Barcelona (adult comics and albums) 0034 32 682 8 05

Mail Order Specialists

Key to abbreviations used:

w/s	= wholesale available	CoBRA	= Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
dis	= bulk discount terms		
cat	= phone/write for catalogue	cc	= major credit cards accepted
s-cat	= sae for catalogue		
wants	= wants lists accepted	sae	= send stamped, addressed envelope with enquiry
s-wants	= sae with wants lists		

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

Golden Age

Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945, the first age of superhero comics, but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comics.

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High St, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Silver Age

*Accepted as starting in 1955 with DC's superhero rebirth through **Detective Comics** #225 (intro-ducing the Martian Manhunter) and **Showcase** #4 (introducing the Barry Allen Flash). Herein covering titles up to late 1960s.*

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

East Coast Comics UK, 28 Acton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7LG (high grade, s-want, cc, sae) 01502 578385 (day) 560727 (eve)

Goldust Comics, 67 St John's Wood High St, London NW8 7NL (high grade, cat, wants, cc) 020 8341 5558

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Quicksilver Comics, PO Box 73, Ossett WF5 0YQ (s-cat, dis, wants, cc, CoBRA) 01924 270500 (fax: 270919)

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax 680686)

Post-Silver Age

Comics from 1970's to date: From Bronze Age-Marvel Age-Lead Age up to Platinum Age-Gimmick Age-Image Age. Historians will doubtless eventually decide on a name.

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Quality Comics, 345 Ditchling Rd, Brighton BN1 6JJ (CoBRA, cc)

Tarpaulin Books and Comics, 5 Oak Close, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3EZ (wants, s-cat) 01842 820139

Hot Comics

Current or key titles, first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble.

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN (wants, cc, dis) 020 8686 2400

Comix-shop. co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1JN (wants, cat, cc) 01628 777998

Advance Imports

US comics are not generally available in UK newsagents, except for some sea-freight shipped low-cover price DCs and Marvels, and can only be found through specialists in the rest of the world. The following companies offer air-shipped copies from all of the major US publishers.

Ace Comics, 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, London SW11 5QJ (cc, CoBRA) 020 7924 3609

Comix-shop.co.uk, 7a High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1JN (wants, cat, cc) 01628 777998

86th Floor Comics & Cards, 6 Shipley Common Lane, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 8TR (dis, cat, cc) 0115 9443009

Forbidden Planet Mega-store, 179 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JR (s-cat cc) 020 7420 3666

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 020 7636 1011

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Red Hot Comics, The Warehouse Block D Unit 8, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH (CoBRA, w/s, dis, wants, cc) tel/fax: 0141 630 0049

Limited Editions

Many high-profile miniseries and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n, cat) 020 8446 3464

Trading Cards

Several mail order dealers carry a range of non-sports cards and related peripherals (files, folders, sleeves).

Beyond Comics, 76 Harlescott Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3BZ (s-cat, s-wants, sae, CoBRA) tel/fax: 020 7564 4213

John McDonald: Non-Sport Trading Cards, 20 Alder Grove, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 3PT (cat, wants) tel/fax: 01236 433358

Old British Titles

The popularity of old British comics continues to increase as more dealers expand into this area. The following specialise in such titles.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Biz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Weird Fantasy, 19 Decoy Road, Ormesby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 3LG (s-cat, s-wants, annuals specialist)

Merchandise

Comics, film and TV-related t-shirts, posters, video games, badges, toys, action figures, etc.

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, 142 Market Halls, Arndale Centre, Luton, Beds LU1 2TP. (specialists in Star Trek, Star Wars and sci-fi collectables) 01582 736256

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Original Art

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available for collectors.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 680686)

Peripherals

Acid-free protection for comics. Backing boards, protective bags, storage boxes, etc.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP 020 8768 0022

Just Comics, 65 Station Road, Warboys, Huntingdon, Cambs PE28 2TH (w/s only, CollectorLine™ distributor) 01487 824895 01487 824896

Planet Warehouse (FPI) *formerly Comics Warehouse*, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

General Fantasy

As well as comics old and new, some suppliers also provide catalogues of multi-media fantasy, covering TV, film, trading cards and toys.

Forbidden Planet Mail Order, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP (cat) 020 7803 1900 (fax: 7803 1901)

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPI) and **Gear for Games (FPI)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Manga Titles

English language translations of Japanese comics and US titles drawn in the Japanese style.

United Publications, 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU (ind, back, cat, wants, cc) 020 8325 9507

Alternative & Biographical

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life comicbooks and graphic novels (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar...)

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (wants) 020 7636 1011

Knockabout Comics, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 020 8969 2945 (fax: 8968 7614)

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY 0115 9508045

Comics Auctions

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their valuable comics. The following accept items for sale, as well as providing regular catalogues for mail order bids.

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Distributors

Anybody considering opening a comics shop or becoming a mail order dealer can obtain further information about the supply of titles from the following who bulk air import US and European comics and related items on a weekly basis.

The Book Palace, Jubilee House, Bedwardine Road, Crystal Palace, London SE19 3AP (graphic novels, art books, comics, remainders, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8768 0022

Diamond Comic Distributors, 2nd Floor, Warton House, 150 High Street, London E15 2NP (US and European comics, cards and related items) 020 8536 5730 (fax: 8536 5736)

Red Route Distribution, Unit 24, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (US & European comics/ graphic novels, back-list specialists) 020 8960 5855

Turnaround Publisher Services, Unit 3, Olympia Trading Estate, Coburg Road, Wood Green, London N22 6TZ (graphic novels, art books, film and TV, popular culture) 020 8829 3000

Mail Order Dealers:

CI's Mail Order Index is the industry's most cost-effective and highly-targeted way to reach a huge dedicated audience in excess of 40,000 readers every month. It costs only £4 ($6 US) per entry per issue to appear and is bookable in advance as a six-issue series. Send pre-payment of £24/$36 (plus £4.20 VAT for UK advertisers) per category with your details to:

Comics International, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 1273 566 333 or e-mail: comicsinternational@yahoo.co.uk

The letters **(FPI)** after entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet International Ltd**

Classified

Advertising terms and conditions

Whether for publication or not, all advertisements must be accompanied by full name, home address and daytime phone number of advertiser.

• All private classified Wants or Announcements ads (comics or card related items only) are free of charge. Maximum 50 words, they will be printed at the publisher's discretion when space permits. *(Only one advertisement can be submitted per letter/per issue so everybody gets a chance to fit in!)*

• FOR SALE ads (and dealer wants/announcements) are charged:
(i) General announcements: Stating no issue numbers, prices or titles. Per 50 words (or part thereof) ..... £5.00 ($7.50 US)
(ii) List ads: Including specific titles, issues and/or prices. Minimum charge, per 100 words (or part thereof) ..... £10.00 ($15.00 US)

Full payment, to Comics International, must accompany wordage.

CI Classified, 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 6JJ

For Sale

The Trigan Empire Don Lawrence hard cover (1978) mint £60. **Collected Works of Buck Rogers** hard cover (1969) mint £75. **Smithsonian Collection of Newspaper Comics** soft cover (1977) fine £50. Jack Katz: **The First Kingdom** soft cover (1978) mint £25. **Little Nemo** Windsor McCay hard cover (1969) Italian version mint £40. **Dan Dare** hard covers (Hawke) volume 2 mint £75, 8-11 all mint £60 each. **Superman: From the '30s to the '70s** hardcover anthology vg/fine £50. Corgi Cars: Man From Uncle (1968) near mint £250, Green Hornet's Black Beauty (1968) vg £150. Prices include postage. John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland 1015 LW.

Comicbook clearout. Almost 10,000 comics in lots of 10 kilograms (approx 160 comics). From £30 per lot. Over 10 types of lot: Marvel, DC, indies, mixed, Dark Horse, Eclipse, First, Malibu, Valiant, Vertigo, teams, superhero, mutant, Superman, Batman, annuals, plus many others. For full details call 01902 335027 after 4pm or send an sae to 9 Highlands Road, Wolverhampton WV3 8AH.

Collection for sale. Thousands of titles at giveaway prices, featuring Marvel, DC and indie comics from the '60s to present, vintage models. For your full list send an sae to D. Morrall, 66 Pen-y-graig Road, Townhill, Swansea SA1 6JY.

Wanted

Advertisers are reminded that Wanted ads must be no longer than 50 words (including address), and only single insertion private advertisements can be published free of charge.

Wanted: DC Direct action figures (MOC/MIB): Black Canary, Dr Fate, Hellblazer, Black Adam, any Green Lantern related, any from the Golden Age series, Superfriends two-packs, Lobo boxset, Darkseid boxset. Please call Steve on 01785 665425. Or e-mail stevanovich27@aol.com.

Wanted: Muppets Stadtler and Waldorf action figures, still packaged preferably. Richard J. Smith, 196 Balby Road, Doncaster DN4 0NE.

Reading copies wanted of **Avengers** 115-118, **Defenders** 8-11 or **Avengers/Defenders: War** trade paperback. Also **Uncanny X-Men** 74. Black and white reprints accepted. Call Robert Sweeney on 0141 889 4462 or e-mail at rabbiejs2000@yahoo.co.uk.

Announcements

Fanzine and small press titles must not be offered for sale before being printed. To verify publication, a sample copy must be sent in along with the advertising copy (50 words max). Single bookings only, so everybody gets a chance!

Leicester-based comic fan and budding writer/artist wants to contact people in the same area for collaborations and drinks. I'm 26 and a regular reader of **Invincible**, Ultimate and X-titles, Brian Michael Bendis and Mark Millar, Christopher Herbert, 9 Stretton Road, Leicester.

Remember the Freedom Fighters? **Comics Retrospective** 8 looks back at the exploits of the greatest heroes of Earth X this month – and Uncle Sam wants you... to buy it. Plus the Avengers Files continue. Available now for £1.20 from Tony Ingram, 3 Lower Harlings, Shotley Gate, Ipswich, Suffolk IP9 1QE.

Tuppenny Rice 1 is here! An eclectic mix of the sublime, the strange and the obtuse. Zombies, an atomic death robot, a tragic Victorian heroine, vampire slugs, a ninja nun and a mechanically recovered chicken all make their debut together in **Tuppenny Rice**. www.tuppennyrice.co.uk

Bingo Bonanza 1. Enjoy the thought of seeing celebrities meeting violent and painful deaths? Then wait no longer. £2 plus 50p postage will get you a copy of **BB**1 (**BB**2 scheduled for later this year, so hurry!). A. Esmond (call me Ez), 84 Ash Tree Way, Shirley, Croydon, Surrey CR0 7SX. Or e-mail esmond.a@btinternet.co.uk

Big War Comics 1 – "Tally ho, cadets!" Join Major Bloodshed and heroes who may die at any minute, for thrilling nearly true wartime adventure. 32 A4 pages, with colour cover (and free warmongering gift) £3 plus 50p postage from P. Scott, 13 Kiln Crescent, Bishop Middleham, Ferryhill, Co. Durham DL17 9AP.

Wanted for non-profit fanzine: pencillers and inkers. I have scripts and character designs waiting for the right candidates. Please forward your six-page samples (panel work as well as pin-ups, please) to Christopher Herbert, 9 Stretton Road, Leicester.

Like pirates? Monkeys? Then try **Pirate Monkeys** 1, out now in full colour and full of giant squid, 'romance', Tom Waits, Charles Darwin, ancient Aztec rock apes and lunchables! Don't miss the next merchandising juggernaut! 28 pages, painted cover, plus free tattoo – £3.50 plus an A5 sae from Richard J. Smith, 196 Balby Rd, Doncaster DN4 0NE.

Haven't read **Hot Nads**, **Bogey Raw Purple** or **Amazing Love Stories** yet? Then there's no time to lose! Visit www.russang.supanet.com or send an sae to A. Greeno, 21 Beck Road, Canvey Island, Essex SS8 7QW.

The wait's finally over – **Pest Control** 4's available now! Airforce, The Link, Penny Dreadful and 10 embark on a new mission... but tragedy awaits within the Corridors of Pain. Suggested for mature readers. £1 from Grant Springford, 2 Cawston Court, Highland Road, Bromley BR1 4AF.

Inker wanted to work on humour strip for submission to US syndicates. Please send samples (copies not originals) to Captain Wonder Cartoons, 31 Dalboyne Pk, Lisburn, Co Antrim, BT28 3BU or e-mail captainwondercartoons@hotmail.com.

"8 out of 10" - **Comics International**! "4 out of 5" - silverbulletcomicbooks.com! **Devilchild Volume II: Freakshow** is a sure-fire critical hit and you can get your copy now from www.devil-child.co.uk (using Paypal) or from www.amazon.co.uk. It's only £6.99. "A must for fans of both horror and humour" – CI.

The Accent UK team behind Phobias, Pirates and more will be displaying their latest self-publishing releases at the Birmingham Comic mart on Saturday 17th July at The Clarendon Suites, Hagley Road, please come along and say hello.

Original comicbook art. Always wished you could afford the prices? Now you can. Stunning images of your favourite characters or from your own designs. Example art available on request. Call 07833 111549 for details.

Sgt Mike Battle: The Greatest American Hero! #5 is a flip-book spectacular with the definitive Battle vs Hitler WWII story and an epic from the 1960s guest-starring the Communist Quartet! Send £1 (and p&p) to Graham Pearce, c/o 42 Talbot Road, Penwortham, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9QX. Why not visit www.sgtmikebattle.com.

Incoming 1 is out at last. A magazine devoted to self-published and indie comics, with articles, reviews, comic strips and interviews with creators, plus lots more! For your copy, please send a cheque for £2.50 (payable to Smallzone) and an A4 sae to Smallzone, 10 Cleveland Avenue, High Ercall, Telford, Shropshire TF6 6AH.

Attention Strontium Dog fans! **Dogbreath** - the **Strontium Dog** fanzine has finally returned. The slimline issue 11 is now out. Send £2.20 cheque/PO to: Dr Bob/A. Kear, Flat 11 Beaufort Street (off Stapleton Road), Easton, Bristol BS5 0SQ. Hey, my stupidly long address takes up too much.

Comic Societies

Join The Eagle Society, dedicated to the memory of Britain's National Strip Cartoon Weekly – The Eagle 1950-1969. For just £18 per year (cheques to The Eagle Society) members receive our quarterly journal **Eagle Times**, as well as the chance to attend social gatherings and meet original Eagle contributors. Write to: Keith Howard, 25a Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2UA. E-mail: rsheaf@npg.org.uk

The Comics Creators Guild for industry veterans and aspiring professionals, the largest comics organisation in Europe. Monthly meetings, newsletter, exclusive publications, free legal advice, special discounts and more. For further info contact: Comics Creators Guild, 22 St James Mansions, West End Lane, West Hampstead, London NW6 2AA. www.comicscreators.org.uk

BUY OR SELL OR EVEN TRADE

It's been tried and tested for over 10 years and it's still going strong...

Comics International's *Classified* section has turned more than one £5 "For Sale" advertiser into a big-time full page dealer.

One of the first-read sections of the magazine for both dealers and fans, *Classified* offers you the opportunity to add a part time job to boost your finances.

Most comic fans have unwanted titles taking up valuable space...

... A loft which is in need of clearing.

... A spare room which is no longer spare.

... A garage which is pining for a car.

Classified can help you not only clear that space, but earn you money while doing so. More than 4,500 such ads have been placed on this page, with regular dealers coming back each issue.

It costs only £5 to place a 50-word For Sale general announcement. Or £10 for a 100-word list ad, detailing issues and prices. Ads can appear within a week of you sending them...

So, what are you waiting for? Everybody else to jump in first?

... It's up to you!

Comic & Card Events

FREE ADMISSION TO ALL SHOWS
DOORS OPEN 12 NOON

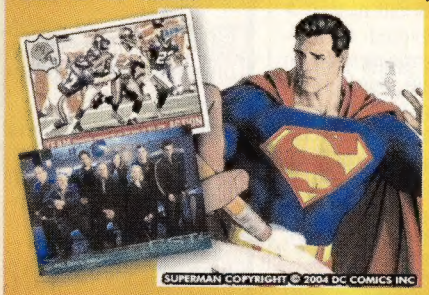
OVER 160 TABLES

THE NATIONAL COLLECTORS MARKETPLACE™

2004
SUNDAY OCTOBER 3

ROYAL NATIONAL HOTEL
BEDFORD WAY
LONDON WC1

With over 160 tables, the National is the largest regular marketplace for comicbook and trading card collectors in the U.K. You will also find a whole range of related materials including TV, Film, Fantasy, Sci-fi and Toys from leading British & international dealers.
A refreshments counter and bar will be open next to the venue.



2000 AD
ACTION FIGURES
ANIME
BABYLON 5
BEANIE BABIES
BRITISH COMICS
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GAMING CARDS
GOLDEN AGE COMICS
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MANGA
NON-SPORTS CARDS
ORIGINAL ARTWORK
POKEMON
POSTERS
SILVER AGE COMICS
SPORTS CARDS
SCI FI/FANTASY
STAR TREK
STAR WARS
TOYS
TRADING CARD SUPPLIES
VIDEOS
YU-GI-OH

HOW TO GET THERE. BUS: 68, 91, 168 or 188 to Woburn Place. UNDERGROUND: Piccadilly Line to Russell Square. NATIONAL RAIL: Euston and Kings Cross are within walking distance of the venue.

FUTURE DATES: 7TH NOVEMBER
5TH DECEMBER 2004

COMICBOOK MARKETPLACE & CARD MART

2004
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 5

FOR THE FINAL TIME AT THE CAMDEN CENTRE
Bidborough St, London WC1

OVER 90 DEALERS TABLES!

The Comicbook Marketplace is held five times a year at the Camden Centre and is just a few minutes walk from Euston, Kings Cross and St. Pancras stations.
There are more than ninety tables with over 1,000,000 comicbooks, magazines and trading cards on sale, including S.F., Fantasy, Film and T.V. related items from Britain's top dealers.

HOW TO GET THERE. BUS: 10, 17, 30, 45, 46, 63, 73, 91, 214, or 259 to Kings Cross/Camden Town Hall. UNDERGROUND: Circle, Metropolitan, Piccadilly or Victoria Line to Kings Cross. BRITISH RAIL: Euston, Kings Cross and St. Pancras are within walking distance of the venue.

BIG CHANGES ARE COMING IN 2005
FULL DETAILS NEXT ISSUE

Dealers: for table availability phone 020 747 66 873

www.comicmart.co.uk

Events

A summary of all the events advertised this issue

September

4/9 **Newcastle:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p48)

5/9 **London:** Comicbook Marketplace & Card Mart, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London ..... (p58)

9/9-21/10 **Newtownards:** Exhibition of the work of Robert T. McCall, Ards Art Centre, Town Hall, Conway Square ..... (p13)

10/9 **Newtownards:** Artist's talk, Robert T. McCall Exhibition, Ards Art Centre, Town Hall, Conway Square ..... (p13)

11/9 **Birmingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, The Clarendon Suites, Hagley Road, Birmingham ..... (p48)

25/9 **Manchester:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p48)

October

2/10 **Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p48)

3/10 **London:** The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p58)

9/10 **Glasgow:** Glasgow Comic & Card Mart, Henry Wood Hall, Claremont Street, Glasgow ..... (p46)

16/10 **Newcastle:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p48)

23/10 **Sheffield:** Comic Mart & Card Show, The Royal Society for the Blind, Main Hall, Mappin Street (off West Street) ..... (p48)

30/10 **Nottingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre, Gedling Street, Nottingham ..... (p48)

November

5/11 **Bristol:** ProCon 1, Ramada Hotel, Bristol ..... (p59)

6-7/11 **Bristol:** Comic Expo, Ramada Hotel, Bristol ..... (p59)

7/11 **London:** The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p58)

13/11 **Leeds:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p48)

20/11 **Birmingham:** Comic Mart & Card Show, The Clarendon Suites, Hagley Road, Birmingham ..... (p48)

December

4/12 **Manchester:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street, Piccadilly, Manchester ..... (p48)

5/12 **London:** The National Collectors' Marketplace, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p58)

Please note: the above listing of UK comics, trading card and related events is free to Comics International display advertisers only.

LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON COMICS-RELATED EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD? SEE OUR INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL GUIDE ON PAGE 54.

ON THE NET? CHECK OUR WEBSITE INDEX WITH EVENT ORGANISER WEB ADDRESSES ON PAGE 51.

AREA 51 & COMICS INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS

EAGLE AWARDS 2004

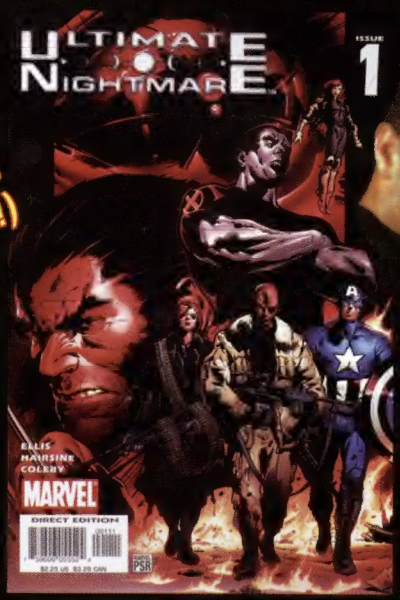
ADMISSION:
£5
FOR THE FULL EXPO WEEKEND*
*excludes Friday ProCon events

ART: HENRY FLINT Incredible Hulk © Marvel Characters, Inc

COMIC EXPO
plus ProCon 1

Comic Expo Variant (Limited to 500 copies!)

SIMON BISLEY will be sketching and signing his new comic FULL CIRKLE



Artist TREVOR HAIRSINE on creating the ULTIMATE NIGHTMARE

MIKE CAREY on HELLBLAZER: from Vertigo comic to Hollywood movie

BRODIE'S LAW

The creators speak about launching a new hit UK indie comic in the States: "Let's Go To San Diego!"

Keynote Speaker:
MIKE NOBLE
...making his first ever convention appearance!

Plus writers and artists from 2000 AD! TRANSFORMERS! AP COMICS! THUNDERBIRDS! and much, much more!

NOVEMBER 5-7

ProCon 1
Free for pro and semi-pro creators
FRIDAY 5/11:
Noon til very late

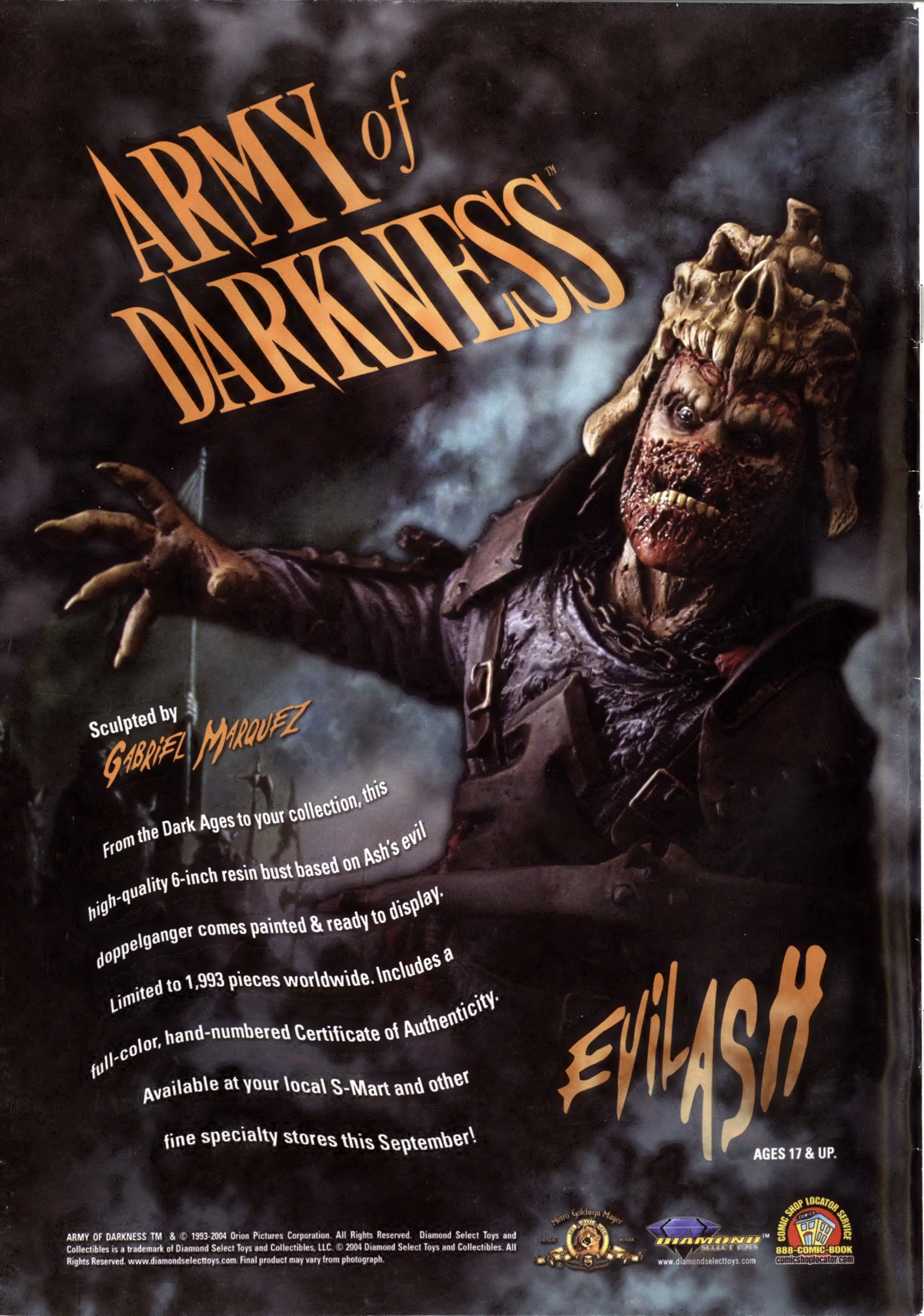
COMIC EXPO
SAT 6/11: 12 Noon - 6:00pm
SUN 7/11: 11:00am - 5:00pm

The Venue:
Ramada Plaza Hotel, Bristol (01179 260 041)
3 minutes from Temple Meads railway station
Comic Expo room rates: £55 (single) £65 (double)

Info: 0117 924 4655

http://comicexpo.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/

Because of personal commitments, US artist Gene Colan is unable to attend and apologises to his UK fans


ARMY of DARKNESS™
Sculpted by
GABRIEL MARQUEZ
From the Dark Ages to your collection, this high-quality 6-inch resin bust based on Ash's evil doppelganger comes painted & ready to display. Limited to 1,993 pieces worldwide. Includes a full-color, hand-numbered Certificate of Authenticity.
Available at your local S-Mart and other fine specialty stores this September!
EVILASH
AGES 17 & UP.

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